This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

600059685$

MASTERS AND WORKMEN

A TALE

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE SOCIAL AND MORAL CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE.

BY LORD B——.

Ay verily, it will be a comely sight in England, when men shall go on as in a better world, bearing with each other's infirmities, joining in each other's comforts.—Sir Walter Scott —Woodstock.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

T. C. NEWBY, PUBLISHER,

WELBECK STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE.

1851.

24g. v. 632.

PREFACE.

We learn from history, that wealth and luxury were Rome's destruction, and that one part of her inhabitants were corrupted by wealth, and the other by abject poverty. The continental rivals of England now believe with rejoicing, that a similar ruin awaits her gigantic empire. Englishmen themselves acknowledge the enormous, and ever increasing evil of pauperism,

which they admit advances with the national prosperity, the national knowledge, and with political reforms.

None are agreed as to the causes, or remedy for such an evil. To us it appears that the former may be found, in the enormous increase of luxury amongst the upper and middle classes, and the fearful disproportion between the price of the labour of the aristocracy, and the labour of the poor; whilst its cure must be sought in a return to a healthy and simple style of life, such as was once prevalent in England, when the middle classes enjoyed all the comforts of life, without the luxuries and miserable affectations, of a second-rate life of dissipation, now so prevalent in all our great towns.

The wants of the families of landed proprietors, and professional, and commercial men, have more than doubled since the end of the last century, and to defray these expenses, their profits in some way, or another, must be increased in proportion. The professional, landed, commercial, and clerical aristocracy, all hang together to secure their own ample incomes, which, as far as they surpass the value of their capital, and the value of their labour, are all unjustly drawn from the labour of the people. In national taxation, the necessaries of the poor are taxed to give a false value to the property of the rich; this is the object of the protectionists. In local undertakings, the money of the people is recklessly expended for jobs of every description, which put money in the pockets of professional men. Labour

ultimately pays for all, and labourers are starving. But in degrading the people by the extravagance of luxury, the higher classes are going too far, even for their own interests. They are sapping the source of their own wealth, and the poor degraded by receiving that as a relief, to which their labour entitles them as a right, are, by degrees, sinking lower and lower, and dragging society down with them.

But enough of this—it glitters, and is called civilization and prosperity; but it is corruption and slavery, and cannot last—no real christian can wish it to last; and all those who love their fellow creatures must endeavour to amend it. Such has been our sole object in composing the following tale. However feeble the effort,

we consider it a duty to contribute our mite to the moral welfare of our fellow countrymen.

It is by the healthy education of the rich and poor, above all of women, that the evils attending the existing state of society can best be arrested. The extension of sound knowledge, and useful activity, can best counteract the corruptions of commerce and idleness and luxury.

To England remains the task of proving to the world, that civilization has a higher point to attain, than the abundance of sensual indulgences, or even mental amusements, for the upper classes, and that there is no ruin awaits a nation, however rich, and however great, when its inhabitants are possessed of equal

rights, can universally enjoy the just profits of their industry, and are strong in knowledge, morality, simplicity, and their respect for God's eternal laws.

MASTERS AND WORKMEN.

CHAPTER I.

"The truth should now be better understood —
Old things have been unsettled."

WORDSWORTH

IT was near the end of July, but though the vegetation of summer was in its richest luxuriance, there seemed no gladness on the face of the earth. The dull, heavy, sunless air was hot and oppressive as in the chamber of death, and quick lightning

flashed at intervals from masses of murky clouds, long gathering in the horizon. The cattle panting for want of water, stood in little groups together on the parched fields; not a bird flitted across the sky; only man—restless man was actively struggling forwards—forwards in pursuit of his daily bread, or of the thousand other objects, which civilization has taught him to covet, whether for good or for evil, who shall decide! The clang of enormous hammers rang on the still air, from a line of long black buildings near the margin of a once romantic river, where a hundred coal fires, white with intensity of heat, glowed doubly bright, as the gloomy day waned dark and dim, and clouds of smoke burst from many of those giant chimneys, which are the true obelisks of modern times.

The whole scene gave the strongest evidence that a servile imitation of the remains of the old races has ceased, their work is done. The busy multitudes of

living men, are creating monuments to themselves, as their fathers did of yore; monuments of knowledge, and industry, more vast, and more noble in their simple utility, than all the vain erections of the slaves of Egypt, or of Rome.

The long tyranny of exalted individuals and exclusive classes over the multitude, if not yet extinct in Europe, has taken a milder form in England, and energy and talent are there chiefly directed, not to make slaves of human beings, but of matter; not to enchain the free born soul, but to govern the elements, that they may work under the controul of mind, for the general benefit of the human race. Industry and science are daily breaking down the old barriers of exclusive privileges, and enabling the poor and the humble, to participate in many of the advantages of civilization, which wealth was once inadequate to procure.

A great change is quietly going on in social existence, for the benefit of the lower

classes, and the rich, whilst seeking to obtain interest for their capital, though they may increase luxury, are, at the same time, advancing intellectual activity, which can alone counteract its evils, and affording to the poor many advantages and conveniences which, by ameliorating their physical condition, tend to elevate their moral character. Some men who see nothing but demoralization in the progress of the people, make futile efforts to arrest the inevitable movement of society, whilst others, anxious for the welfare of all mankind, exert themselves, not to check, but to direct to worthy objects, the restless activity of the age. To them, even the blackness and dense atmosphere of a great manufacturing town, and the clang of the hammer, and the rush of the steam carriage, have their charms and their inspiration, though well aware that evil can never be banished from the face of the earth, nor the heart of man entirely changed.

Yonder flying vehicles, smoking and groaning along the railroad to the magnificent station of one of England's dark cities of industry, though a minister of good, yet bears within itself the evidence, that joy and sorrow, vice and virtue, wealth and poverty must continue to travel on together to the grave, as long as society exists. In those carriages, as in life, there is a first, a second, and a third class, all profitting, in a certain degree, by the inventions of the age, yet all retaining unchanged their early destination.

The young countess, who leans back against the luxurious cushions of a first class carriage, and weeps because her only child has recently been laid in the grave, sheds not less bitter tears because she is borne along, thirty miles an hour instead of ten. The wealthy banker in the next carriage, who hopes to secure a profit of twenty thousand pounds, by the rapidity of his journey, and his gorgeous wife, who is more engaged with her lap-dog than her

husband, are not less proud and insolent, because they do not travel post. The old workman, with his pretty little grandchild on his knee, in the second class, is not less industrious, or honest, because he has been able, for a trifling sum, to travel fifty miles and return in one day, to visit his sick son. No! he is telling his neighbour, a railway is a grand invention for the poor, to whom time and labour are the only capital, and the same thought occupies the minds of many of the motley crowd, who with baskets and small bundles fill the third class carriages. Even that tall, sorrowful-looking man, in a thread-bare suit, who is counting so anxiously the few shillings that remain in his purse, smiles as he looks on the delicate, slender girl of seventeen at his side, and remembers how many hours of fatigue she has been spared, by that rail-road. But though he has this one cause for rejoicing, other sorrows rankle unchanged in his heart, and when the train rolled rapidly along a terrace commanding

an extensive view of the smoking city it approached, tears rose to the poor man's eyes. No one marked his emotion, save his companion, who watched him ever anxiously, and understanding his feelings, she gently pressed his hand in hers, as the fiery course of the carriages finished, under the lofty arch of the station. In another moment, the imprisoned crowd rushed from the vehicles on to the platform. All was bustle and confusion. Some of the passengers were crying out for carpet-bags, others were eagerly claiming trunks, as they were pulled forth from their hiding-places, into the light of the gas; one old gentleman was in despair, that another had walked off with his portmanteau; the banker's wife vainly offered a sovereign to a policeman to catch her lap-dog, which had disappeared amidst the crowd, till her rage was directed against her maid, who had forgotten a variety of travelling baskets,

books, and umbrellas, at the last station, where they had changed carriages.

The melancholy traveller by the third class, was exempt from such troubles; his whole luggage was contained in a small bundle he carried under his arm. As he observed the confusion and anxiety of those around him, he felt that poverty has some advantages, after all, and with his young companion at his side, he quietly endeavoured to make his way amidst the crowd.

He stopped as he approached the gateway leading to the town, and taking a letter from his pocket, held it up to the gas-light, to look once more at the direction. He had scarcely read it, when some one behind him desired him, in a haughty voice, to stand aside, and not to stop up the public passage. He looked up, and his eyes met the imperious glance of the banker, who had travelled by the first class.

"Wealth, and success, and good living, had greatly altered this man, since they had last met, for many years had passed since then; but he knew him instantly, to be James Graves, the son of a smuggling ship captain, who had once been the lowest clerk in the bank, of which he was now the leading partner.

A cold shudder passed over the poor man, from head to foot, as the haughty gentleman, in passing, slightly touched his shoulder, but he gave no sign of recognition. The banker evidently knew him not. He paused, with some curiosity under the gateway, to watch the rich man enter the handsome carriage that was waiting for him, and take his place at the side of his murmuring and discontented wife. The rain was falling in torrents, and a short sigh burst from the poor traveller's lips, when, after the carriage had rolled away, he drew his young companion's arm within his, and putting up a torn cotton umbrella, stepped out in the muddy road. There was no

envy in his heart; he was incapable of envying any man's wealth; but the remembrance of injustice, forced that sigh from his heart.

In silence he led his young companion by the shortest foot-way, towards the centre of the busy, populous town, through squalid gloomy streets, from whence the houses nearly excluded the light of day. There is nothing more loathsome and revolting to a benevolent heart, than these secret and long hidden recesses of great cities, which, in many instances, have been suddenly broken open by the social earthquake of modern railways and laid bare, with all their filth and their poverty, and their dense population, to the public eye. These plague spots of our great commercial towns are no longer hidden by plaster palaces and flaunting gin shops, from the fastidious eyes of luxury, but rent asunder by a railway, it seems if the very worst parts of these wretched dwellings were displayed, to arouse the passers by

to a sense of the duty and necessity of endeavouring to improve the moral and physical condition of those whom destiny has condemned to inhabit such abodes.

Charles Seaton, the traveller by the third class, was directed, as the shortest way, to the place of his destination, to pass through one of these newly explored quarters. The air was heavy with evil odours; and the ragged, unshod children, who were playing in the black puddles, or at the ends of narrow openings into filthy alleys, had a shrivelled, withered look, like unhealthy plants that perish prematurely in a tainted atmosphere. A half-clad, wild-looking woman, scolding furiously, rushed suddenly from an open door, amidst a party of urchins at play on a coal heap, and dealing sundry boxes on the ear, to the right and left, dragged off her squalling son to receive further punishment within her wretched dwelling; a crowd of sailors and ragged females was gathered a little further on, round a drunken ballad

singer, and the young girl affrighted by such scenes, looked trembling in her brother's face, whilst she clung closer than before to his arm.

"No, Amy," he said, in reply to her glance, "fear not; you shall not live in such a neighbourhood. We are poor it is true, but we have learnt better things than the wretched creatures here, who are degraded by their ignorance, to filth and vice, and not by their poverty. We have learned to love peace, and order, and cleanliness, and with this love, God gives the power to win these best of earthly blessings. No, no, my Amy, we are poor, but the pure fresh air of heaven is not yet denied us?"

"Have we far to go, brother?" said the girl.

"To a house at the further end of the town."

"I wonder you know the way, when it is so long ago, since you were here," returned Amy, gently.

The blood mounted instantly to the brow of the poor traveller, but he answered not. For the next five minutes he walked on with extreme rapidity, without appearing to see anything, though the street was crowded with passengers; at length he suddenly turned aside into a solitary lane, where no one was for the moment visible.

"Amy," he then said, "I need not remind you, to be silent as to our story. It concerns no man from whence I came, or what I may have been. If you are questioned, you must reply, that we come from London, where I have been unfortunate. This is perfectly true."

"I will do all you wish, dear Charles," she returned, "for no one has ever loved me but you."

"My own Amy! you have long been my only comfort and solace upon earth, young as you are, you are my friend, and my consoler."

"Because you have trusted me," she

softly answered; "because I know all your secrets, and all your hopes."

"Ah, you have had, in truth, a sad childhood," said the poor traveller. "You have known none of the pleasant days of youth, Amy, and I only have been the cause of your trials, but you pity, instead of reproaching me, poor girl!"

"Because I know that you have never done wrong, my own dear brother," replied Amy, "but we must forget what is past, and trust that our long, long journey has not been made in vain. I will do all I can to help you."

"Thank heaven your spirit is not broken," answered the man, with a deep sigh, "but there are times when I dare not hope, and then I am more anxious for you than for myself."

"That is because you have known better days, Charles, but I never did, so don't be sorry for me; I have no fears."

"My brave Amy!" said the man, re-

garding with a feeling of pride and admiration, the pretty little creature at his side, but both were soon forgotten in pity, and his eyes filled with tears.

He spoke no more, but on they went till they reached the northern outskirts of the town, and approached a small stone built cottage at the entrance of a market garden, which Charles pointed out to his companion, as the place where be hoped to find a temporary home. He then opened the little gate leading to it, and bidding her follow him, walked up a path between the cabbages, to an elderly man, who was digging near the end of the house.

"What is your pleasure?" asked the gardener, as they approached.

"Does Alex Simpson live here?" inquired the traveller touching his hat.

"Alex Simpson!" repeated the old man, "where do you come from, to ask such a question? he has been dead these seven years and more."

"And his sister?"

"She died before him. I never knew either of them, but people said, she died of a broken heart, after the nephew of Mr. Dalton disgraced himself and the whole family, for she had been the boy's nurse. But why do you ask after these old people? you seem to be a stranger in these parts," and he surveyed the poor traveller, from head to foot, with inquisitive eyes. His thread-bare garments made no pleasing impression on the gardener. But Seaton was accustomed to be treated slightingly; he knew it was the common lot of the poor, and he had learned to bear it, with, at least, apparent indifference.

"Yes," he replied, "I am a stranger, but I knew Alex many years ago, when he was in service in the South, and I heard he had settled here. I am looking for a lodging for myself, and my sister, and I should have preferred a room under his roof, to being with perfect strangers."

"And what may have brought you to the town?" was the rejoinder.

"I have come to seek work!" said the traveller.

"What may be your trade?" enquired the gardener, coldly.

"I was once clerk in a merchant's house," was the reply, "but ill health compelled me to leave my situation, and I have been so long unemployed, though I would gladly do anything to gain an honest livelihood for myself and my young sister."

In spite of Seaton's desire to appear calm, there was something so remarkable in the tone in which he pronounced these words, that the gardener regarded him with even more curiosity than before. "In a merchant's house! you must have recommendations then," he rejoined.

"I have none," was the reply. "Misfortunes have come thick upon me, and as London is a fearful place for the friendless and unfortunate, I have come here to try if I can find better luck."

"No merchant will employ you here, without a character," said the old man, drily. "No merchant here, will have anything to do with a man, he knows nothing about. Bless you, connexion is even more necessary than a good character, to get any man a place! You must be five and thirty at least, and have still your way to make in the world, why that is enough to blast your character at once."

"I have learnt that, by experience," said Seaton, bitterly, "but I cannot sit down quietly and starve by the roadside, so to-morrow I must try to get a day's work, at least, and perhaps you can direct me where to find a night's lodging."

"A night's lodging and a day's work," returned the gardener, and as he rested his foot on his spade, he looked anxiously from Seaton to his sister. There was something in the appearance of Amy, which touched his heart.. "She is a

pretty creature," he continued, at length brushing a tear from his eye, with the back of his sunburnt hand, "just like my poor Mary, when I laid her in the grave, beside her mother, and would be hard to send her further, to seek for a lodging. I don't like strangers, who cannot give a clear account of themselves, that is true, but for one night, it can do me no harm, so if you like to sleep in the loft, she shall have my lost child's bed, till you find her a better lodging; but she must make it herself for I have nobody to help her."

"Many thanks!" answered Charles, "she is used to work."

"And you, also," said the gardener, and he glanced at the traveller's hands, which were rough with hard labour, whilst his shoulders were slightly bent, as if by toil; yet, bounded as was the old man's knowledge of the world, he felt fully convinced that the stranger was no ordinary day labourer. Tall and finely formed, though

his complexion was sun burnt, and lines of care marked his ample forehead, he was still strikingly handsome, and his large, dark, melancholy eyes, were at the same time expressive of strong intellect, and great benevolence. Even old Joe the gardener felt, as he thus surveyed him attentively, a second time, that he must be a man of knowledge, and of noble thoughts, and awed by the presence of a superior spirit, regarded him with involuntary respect. Convinced that the proper occupation of such a man was mental, not bodily labour, he listened with increased curiosity to Seaton's assurance, that he was ready to accept any employment, and that if the gardener would engage him as a day labourer, till he found something better to do, he should be greatly obliged to him. He would consider his lodging as a part of his hire, he said.

"We will see to-morrow," answered the old man, "and if I find you understand

the business, I may make a bargain with you, for I am just in want of a helper. So come in, and your sister perhaps can boil us some potatoes for supper. But I forgot to ask, what is your name."

It did not escape old Joe's observation, that a strange expression passed over the face of his guest, at this question, and he hesitated a moment, before he replied, "James Preston."

The gardener repeated the name, as if unconsciously, and then requesting the strangers to follow him, he entered the cottage. It was a homely place, and yet not devoid of those simple comforts, which are the honest labourer's consolation, after a hard day's work. It was a pleasant sight, to see how quickly Amy, having laid aside her bonnet and shawl, began with alacrity to prepare the evening meal. In spite of the delicate and refined character of her beauty, it was evidently a task to which she was well accustomed, and Seaton, though she was born to what the

world, considers higher occupations, was glad at heart, that his very misfortunes had given such a character to her education, that she was likely to pass through life happier and more independent than those whom habits of luxurious indulgence, have rendered fastidious and elegant, but useless members of society.

When all was ready for supper, the old gardener said a long grace, and then all three sat down, and partook of the simple meal.

Joe, who, in his youth, had been a gentleman's servant, failed not to remark, that the manners of both brother and sister at table, were not those of the working class; and, though he said nothing, his curiosity was more than ever excited. Some fears for the hoarded savings carefully hidden in a hole in the thatched roof, for a moment, crossed his mind; but these were dissipated, when he saw the affection with which Seaton blessed his young sister, before they parted for the night

and the old gardener retired to bed, with the happy consciousness of having done a kindness to one whom misfortune had very heavily tried.

Seaton, on the morrow, commenced his labours, which he continued for several days, very much to the satisfaction of his host, whilst Amy was cheerfully occupied in the cottage, in cooking their meals, and putting their much-worn wardrobe in order.

It was a pause of rest, necessary for both; but towards the end of the week, old Joe was surprised, by Seaton's telling him, after supper, that he must leave him on the morrow, at least for the day, as he desired to visit a person who resided in the country at some miles' distance.

The gardener insisted on their partaking of his breakfast, before their departure, and on paying Seaton what he considered the balance due to him for his work; nor, was it without feelings of regret, and some

mistrust of their return, that he saw them set off, although Seaton told him to expect them back in the evening, or early in the morning.

CHAPTER II.

And let him, where and when he will, sit down
Beneath the trees, or by the grassy bank
Of high-way side—and finally
As in the eye of nature he has lived,
So in the eye of nature let him die.

THE dew was still weighing down the ears of the ripe corn, as Seaton and Amy crossed a stile, by the side of the high-road, about a mile from the gardener's cottage, and continued their way along a narrow path in the fields.

As they left the smoke, and the noise, and the bustle of the great manufacturing town behind them, the rural sights and sounds of summer, filled the heart of the girl with delight; but Seaton walked gravely on in silence, occupied by his own thoughts, and only, occasionally, glancing round, as if to be assured, that he had not lost his way. It was quite evident, he was well acquainted with the country he traversed, and he proceeded without questioning any one they met. They had walked about five miles, when, at the crossing of two country lanes, they came to a low, poor, thatched cottage, above the door of which, a black board announced that beer was sold within.

Amy had not complained; but Seaton knew she must be weary, and proposing that they should rest there awhile, he led her into the cottage.

Though summer, there was a fire burning in the kitchen, and two fishermen, whose carts were waiting before the door,

and three pitmen decently dressed, were sitting drinking at a table in the centre of the floor. These men were loud in discourse, and took little notice of Seaton, as he entered, and seated himself with his sister, near the window, where, at his request, the tidy landlady brought him a slice of bread, and a pint of beer. He then asked her, what distance he had to walk to the village of Linton.

"A mile and a half," answered the woman; "do you know anybody there?"

"I have been told there is a gentleman's house in the neighbourhood, where I am likely to get work," was Seaton's reply.

'Oh, yes, Mr. Graves has a very fine house," was the reply, "but the family are not there, and the gates are always locked for fear of beggars. It was very different when old Mr. Dalton lived at the Manor House, before his bank in the town was burnt down; and that fire was a real misfortune to the parish of 'Linton.'"

"How so?" enquired Seaton.

"Why, you must be a stranger in these parts, if you don't know what a generous, good man Mr. Dalton is, and that he has been driven nearly mad by the frightful conduct of his favourite nephew. It is a dreadful story, and nearly broke the good gentleman's heart; not that he cared for the loss of his money or his house, but there was worse than that; and then he loved his worthless nephew too, people said, before all this happened; but, since then, nobody has ever dared to speak of him in his company; and he even forbid his own sister, the young man's mother, to come into his house, because she persisted in believing her son was innocent. But she soon died, poor thing; the trial was too heavy for her, for the wretch was her only son."

"And where did the poor lady die?" inquired Seaton, in á low voice.

"At the cottage of her husband's poor old brother, Mr. Philip Seaton," answered the landlady. "He has been only half-

witted, since he lost his fortune by gambling in his youth; but he is a kind, good soul, and took her home, and divided his little pittance with her till her death."

"And is the old gentleman living still?" demanded Seaton.

"I saw him yesterday at the door of his house," answered one of the pitmen. "It is a poor place, but you may know it by the garden; which Mr. Philip keeps in capital order. It is just beside the large oak tree, before you reach the village. The gentry all look down on him since his nephew's disgrace."

"Aye, because he is poor," said another, "but he cannot help that either; and all the neighbours pity Mr. Philip, and help him as much as they can, for he is a real gentleman. His fathers before him lived in this parish and knew our fathers: but that was not the case with Graves. No, no; we all know he is an upstart, whose

father was a rascally smuggler, and had a privateer in the war time, to rob on the high seas."

"Some say the nephew has come back again," said one of the men, who had not yet spoken.

"He had better keep away from this part of the country," rejoined another, "for there is not an honest man in the parish, who would exchange a word with him. He has brought disgrace on all belonging to him."

"But he has been properly punished," returned the pitman, "and that is some comfort to such as us; who, if we only steal a shilling's worth of potatoes to keep our children from starving in a hard winter, have to repent in prison with the treadmill to teach us better; but this young rascal had no excuse for his villany."

"Yet I pity him for all that," said the landlady. "Some said that Mr. Graves, who married his mother's niece, and was

in the bank with him, did all he could to lead him into bad company—and he was very young. He was always kind to his poor mother—and as good a lad as ever came to the vicar's school, where my good man was gardener. Shall I bring you another pint of beer, sir?" she demanded. suddenly turning to Seaton, as she ceased speaking—but he declined her offer—and paying his reckoning, arose and left the cottage with his sister.

His brow was sadder as he pursued his way; and though he drew the arm of his sister within his, he never once addressed her. At first, she spoke to him from time to time; but when she received no answer, and observed that he was sad, she remained silent, and amused herself by watching the clouds as they flitted over the clear, blue sky, wondering the while, in what part of that bright heaven her dear, lost mother dwelt.

Before long they left the open country and turned into a thick, old wood, where

the tangled underwood, scarcely left space sufficient for one person to tread the narrow path. Suddenly they stood at the brink of a steep bank, and they heard the murmuring of running water, and saw far beneath them, through the thick leaves, the flashing of a little stream in the sunshine, as it gushed over its rocky and uneven bed. In five minutes they had descended the rugged cliff, and stood at the brink of the rivulet. A few rude stones, placed at intervals in the stream, formed the only means of passing it.

It was a wild and lovely spot, so secluded and solitary, that if suddenly brought there, from the modern bustle of trade, and railways, and machinery, a man might imagine that he had been transported back, some hundreds of years, to the simple times, when the fox lurked alone in the rocks, where the hammer of the miner is ringing, and none but the wild deer and the huntsman and his hounds interrupted the solitude of those hills and moors, over

which triumphant steam now daily bears a peopled train of carriages. And in truth, this scene had remained unchanged for centuries. The peasants, who in Catholic times, went to the neighbouring monastery to petition for that relief in their distress, which they now can demand as their right, from their fellow men, had trodden those same stones, which still lay in the stream, and the stone basin hewn out of the solid rock on the opposite side, and the limpid stream that filled it to overflowing, and the gnarled old oak on the hoary bank above, whose fantastic roots and branches shadowed both the fountain and the stream, were still the same, as when the maidens from the castle, whose ruins were scattered on the heights above, had come thither to wash their milk pails in the running water.

A darker shadow gathered upon the brow of the poor traveller, as he paused, and for some minutes, gazed earnestly

upon a scene, which he had known from childhood. It was unchanged—but he? what had he become, since he last stood upon those banks. Bowed down by disgrace and sorrow, and totally cut off from all association with those to whom his heart still clung with patient love, he felt as if all the dreams of his youth were utterly blasted, and that disgrace and suffering, had rendered life a burden to him.

But still there was a proud spirit, that animated Seaton's heart! and in the midst of his misfortunes and social humiliations, which would have driven many men to suicide, his mind had lost nothing of its moral energy. Injustice and suffering had aroused his powers of resistance to unyielding activity. He had suffered long with patience, whilst opposition was unavailing, but now, when he felt that the time for action had arrived, he was firmly resolved, no power on earth should crush him.

"I have been robbed, of all the world esteems worth possessing," he thought, "but I shall have a day of reckoning with my accusers yet, and by the help of Heaven, before I die, my name shall be cleared of every stain and reproach. My sister shall not have cause to deny her parentage!"

"Brother," said Amy, gently taking his hand in hers, and pointing to the rocky fountain on the opposite side of the stream, "I have been there before; long, long ago, and there was a beautiful lady took me in her arms, and kissed me."

"It must indeed be long ago," answered Seaton with a sad smile. "You have a good memory, my Amy."

"Oh, no," she replied, "I had quite forgotten it, till I came here, and perhaps I have only dreamt it, for it seems to me, as if the beautiful lady was that cousin Grace, of whom you talk so often. Are we going to see her to-day brother?"

"No, not to-day, Amy," he replied, in a troubled voice.

"But she is not dead?" persisted the girl.

"For her own sake, I trust not," was the reply, "but were she in the grave, it could make no difference to me—we shall meet no more. I am dead forever to her."

"But Charles, will you not tell her that you have returned—will you not go and see her?" she persisted, unconscious of the pain she was inflicting.

"Amy! Amy!" he bitterly returned, "have I not often told you, that excepting yourself and our friend Mr. Vernon, there is no one in the wide world, who ever knew your brother, who desires to behold him again. My poor girl, it is cruel for you to live like an outcast in the wide world, yet this must be the case, unless our destiny most strangely alters, and though the task is a cruel one, it is my duty to prepare you to support such a fate with courage."

"I want nobody's love, but yours, my dear brother. All those strangers we have seen upon our journey, were nothing to us, why should I grieve, if they do not love us, whom they do not know. Yet I am sure they would love you, if they knew you as well as I do, for you are so good."

"That you love me, my dear Amy," he returned, "is now my only joy. I have learnt that the world's love, is too fickle to be worth regretting. I have learnt, by a sad experience, what I would teach you by less painful lessons, the value of independence. To be happy, we must cease to be the slaves of the world's opinion. We should never set it at defiance, but we must forget it, when it is unjust; and strong in self-respect, we must pursue the course of rectitude. The best men have many enemies, but their slanders cannot destroy the peace of an honest man, who sets more value on virtue, than on praise. But no more of this, you will understand me

better, when you are older," and Seaton ceased speaking, and turned away to descend the hill.

"I understand all you say perfectly," answered the girl, "and I love to listen to you, for there are so many things in the world, I want to know more about."

"Patience—patience—you will learn too much in time," answered Seaton. "It is well to be young, and know little."

"That is very strange doctrine, sir, in this age of progress, where education is to be made a matter of compulsion," said a little man, in a very shrill voice, as he suddenly appeared from a path amongst the brushwood, and stood directly face to face before the travellers.

Seaton gazed at him with anxious curiosity from head to foot. He was a very strange little personage. He was probably above sixty, and his hair was as white as snow, but his naturally fair and delicate complexion, had still a rosy hue, like the red streaks on a summer apple;

his light blue eyes were very bright and clear, his features were sharp, and a very narrow neckcloth left nearly the whole of his long, bony throat uncovered. He wore spectacles, and a straw hat; his coat of true sporting fashion was of black velvet, and amply furnished with pockets, but shabby, and of such an antiquated form, that it was probably of about half the age of the wearer. A pair of large, water-proof boots, that came above his knees, seemed too heavy for his slender legs to carry, and a fishing rod in his hand, and a basket on his back, completed the costume of the angler.

Everything about this man was very poor, and very common, yet he had the air of a gentleman, and Seaton recognized him at once; but he forbore from making himself directly known, for many reasons.

"If you are a friend to progress, sir, as your words seem to convey," he said, with a slight bow, and a smile, "I will thank you to allow me to pass."

"There is no need," returned the stranger, "as I intend progressing in the same direction as yourself, we may as well, if it be not disagreeable to you, proceed together. There is a rage at present for going forwards, and though we may not have the good luck to win the race, at all events, we shall have left some part of the world behind us."

"A man must look sharp now a days, or the world will leave him behind it," answered Seaton in the same light tone, in which his new companion had spoken.

"The world has long ago thrown me out of the saddle, and left me to grope my way along in the dust, as well as I can, to my last resting place," said the old man, gaily; "but even when I was young, I had never any desire to run after it; and now, in my old age, I am content with my rod and my line, and ask not whither the waters are hastening, that leave me sitting lonely and forgotten on their banks. Look, sir, at that stream, it is

like the current of society, always hurrying, it knows not whither; pursuing, it knows not what—struggling, and murmuring, and fretting against a thousand tiny obstacles, but bearing down great ones before it, till it is lost—lost—as we shall likewise be when our time comes. It is an old story; but I love the stream better than the world, and so I am a fisherman, and the world calls me a fool."

"It is better than to be called a knave," answered Seaton, somewhat bitterly.

"I am not sure of that," answered the fisherman. "Knavery is much respected now-a-days, and fools never were. A man is seldom a knave for nothing. He puts money in his purse, and money does wonders. Once persuade the world that a man is rich, and he will soon have troops of friends. It is very odd, but people are never jealous of a knave's success, they are only envious of the good."

"You judge mankind severely," rejoined Seaton.

"Oh, there are exceptions, a very few exceptions; but I am a merry cynic. I don't put on sackcloth and ashes for the sins of the world. I know its sons too well for that; I only keep out of their way. And Heaven mend them, say I, whilst they—are all hoping miracles from education. I suppose all the educated sinners have forgotten how many years they were at school. Has your pretty companion been at school, sir?"

"Never," answered Seaton.

"She ought to be ashamed to confess it," returned the old man with pretended gravity.

"She has learnt something nevertheless," said the traveller, glancing proudly at his sister; "our knowledge would be little, if we derived it all from books and schools."

"You are a philosopher, Sir," said the fisherman, turning and taking a second survey of Seaton's threadbare garments.

"I fear not," was his laconic reply.

"Then pray may I venture to ask, what you are?"

"I am not in the habit of recounting my history on the high way," returned Seaton, in some confusion.

"Cautious—quite right, as the world goes," said the old man nodding his head, as a sign of approbation, without being in the least disturbed by the implied rebuke. "I suppose you are going to Linton."

"Perhaps I am."

"Oh, I beg your pardon, I meant nothing intrusive, only if you are going much further, your companion looks tired, and had better rest at my cottage, which you see before us. I have some fine trout in my basket, and shall be glad of your company to eat them."

"You are very kind sir—to an entire stranger," answered Seaton, in some embarrassment.

"I dare say you think me very odd, to invite you in this way," rejoined the fisherman, "and every body does consider me very odd; but though I am a poor man, and despised by those who think poverty a crime, I love my fellow creatures, when I can do them a service; and above all, I feel for a poor gentleman, sir! as I am sure you are. I am a poor gentleman myself, sir, and I know by experience, it is a position, which it is devilish hard to support, like a laughing philosopher, till age comes upon us, and the calm of indifference follows the tempest of young life's passions and hopes."

"I assure you, I have no claims to be considered a gentleman," said Seaton stopping suddenly short, and holding out his hands towards the old man. "These horny palms, may prove to you, that I have been long used to toil."

But the stranger did not look at the traces of labour, to which Seaton directed

his attention; his eyes rested on the long cicatrice of a deep wound, which crossed the palm of the left hand. He looked earnestly in the face of the traveller, then at the mark, and then at the face once more. An extraordinary expression of joy mingled with deep sorrow and anxiety and doubt, in the mean while disturbed the old man's placid countenance. His eyes filled with tears, he trembled from head to foot, then suddenly exclaiming, "Seaton, Seaton, my own dear Charles! hast thou forgotten uncle Philip, your own mother's brother?" he cast away his fishing rod, and threw his arms around the traveller's neck. He kissed him, he embraced him by turns, like one whom joy had bereft of reason.

"This is too much—too much," murmured Seaton, whose tears likewise fell thick and fast. "I knew you, my dear uncle, but I feared to make myself known —my shame and degradation made me shrink—"

"What do you mean by such language?" exclaimed the old man, suddenly standing erect before him. "Do you suppose that I believe a word of their confounded lies? Not a bit of it. Shame, indeed! Oh! mercy—mercy; I am only too happy that I have lived to see this day."

And Uncle Philip sat down on a stone by the way-side, and wept like a child.

Amy could not restrain her tears as she looked upon this scene.

"Thank you—thank you more than I can express, for this faithful and confiding love," said Seaton, as he supported the old gentleman in his arms, and held his hand in his. "I did not expect it, after all I have suffered, and it is very precious."

"But have you never got my letters?" inquired uncle Philip.

"None have reached me for more than five years," was the reply, "owing to my being in the interior of the country."

"And having no news of you, I began to fear you were dead, and that has been the worst of all," answered the old man, still regarding Seaton with looks of anxiety. "Oh, Charles, my own dear boy, time and sorrow have laid their hands heavily upon us both, since we parted. I should not have known you, but for that cut. It breaks my heart when I think of your fair, bright, joyous, face—and see you now—the same —but oh, how changed! You have suffered fearfully! but how could it be otherwise? We knew it—your poor mother and I—and I feared it had killed you."

"I have a strong heart, uncle," was Seaton's reply, and there was something both proud and bitter in the tone in which he spoke.

"Ay, my boy," returned uncle Philip; "but the storm often strikes down the strongest tree. I was strong once, and you see how I am changed; these boots which

fitted my legs tightly, twenty years ago, are now wide enough for my whole body, —and your poor mother—but we will not speak of her."

"Yes, I knew my disgrace would be her death," returned the traveller, in a low and agitated voice; "but I trust in Heaven, she died persuaded of my innocence!"

"Charles," answered the old man, laying his hand impressively on his nephew's arm, "you know little of women, if you fear the contrary. There may be those who, young and gay, and dissipated, live only for the smiles of the world; but there are far more who live only to love; and sorrow, and misfortune, and even shame, only bind their affection the stronger. Such was your sainted mother."

"And such is your niece, Amy; whom I have brought back to you, unsoiled by the vices of the colony to which she was sent, to share my banishment, after our

poor mother's death, by her worse than heartless relatives," said Charles, leading the girl up to her old uncle, who embraced her with affection.

"Poor child, she has been hardly used," he said, "and it is a cruel lot for a girl to lose a mother when only three years old. Pretty little Amy, she cannot remember the sad day when that happened, nor the tears I wept over her, when she cried to her mother to come back again; but she will love her poor, foolish, old uncle Philip, for Charles's sake."

"Oh, yes! and for his own too. Charles has often talked to me about you," said the girl cheerfully, "and now he has returned to his native country, we shall all be happy again, I feel quite sure."

"That is a brave girl," said the old man, "but don't let us stand here, when my cottage is so nigh. You must both be tired and hungry; and if I invited you to dinner when I knew not who you were, think how joyfully I shall spread the board

when I know to whom I give a welcome. Come, children, come."

And holding out an arm to each, he walked between his nephew and niece, with an exulting heart, towards his cottage.

CHAPTER III.

Say, can he think of this with mind serene?
WORDSWORTH.

CHARLES SEATON was a proud man. In youth his heart was so frank and gay, and full of joy, that his pride was scarcely apparent. He had been proud of his good name—which he had inherited from honourable, if not noble, ancestors—and, perhaps, too proud of his conscious honesty, which he did not suppose could ever be called in question.

He had borne misfortune sternly and nobly; he had disdained to degrade himself by paltry complaints, or impotent struggles against his destiny. He had expected neither help nor compassion from other men. He knew he stood alone in the world; and that he had nothing to rely on but the mercy of Heaven and his own unyielding powers of endurance and patient energy of character, for ultimate triumph over the evil fortune—or, perhaps, over the secret enemies who had blasted the happiness, the honour, and the hopes of all his early life. Had his heart not been full of benevolence, and gentle kindness towards his fellow creatures, his sufferings might have rendered him a stern and bitter misanthrope; but this was not the case; the presence of his innocent young sister, or the remembrance of some whom he had left to mourn his afflictions, never failed to re-awaken all the love and tenderness of his nature; and ceasing to be irritated by the injustice of

which he was the victim, he resolved to bear all with patience for the sake of those he loved. For their sakes life had been still precious to him during long years of accumulated suffering ; for their sakes he had returned to scenes which recalled all the most painful remembrances of his existence ; and unspeakable were the emotions of his throbbing heart, as he followed Uncle Philip and Amy through the little garden, to the threshold of the humble cottage, where he knew his beloved mother had died for his sake of a broken heart. Never more could he clasp her to his heart, as he had once fondly hoped. Never more should he meet the glance of her loving eyes, or hear the voice which had gladdened his childhood. He had long known this ; but now, when he saw his mother's arm-chair standing empty, and the closed Bible—with a faded rose between the leaves on the little table before it—which Uncle Philip had never moved since

she last sat there, he felt, for the first time, in all the vividness of reality, that in this world, she was for ever lost to him.

Uncle Philip was too much engrossed by his own joy, to observe Charles Seaton's agitation. All his long years of deprivation and sorrow, and labour, were forgotten in the happy assurance that the nephew, who had been the plaything of his youth, had returned to be the comfort and solace of his old age. He forgot even to moralise —his excited feelings vanquished his reasoning powers—the use of which, had afforded him consolation under the heaviest afflictions. But his thoughts took another turn; when he, at length, observed the deep sorrow with which Charles was gazing at his mother's chair.

"Ay, poor boy," he said, "I ought to have prepared you for this. But I never thought it would grieve you—it has been such a comfort to me to fancy her sitting there. Ah, Charles, Charles! after you

were taken from us, her feeble lamp was soon exhausted! She had need of better comfort, and better nourishment, than my poor tongue could give, or my weak arms could earn for her."

"This is horrible," murmured Seaton. "Am I to believe that she suffered from actual want?"

Philip shook his head sadly.

"Times were very hard; and there were few fish to be caught in the heats of summer; and, moreover, Charles, my boy, you know I was not born to work, and I am somewhat feeble, yet I did what I could. But I am glad you are come, Charles; for I am getting old, and I cannot bear the thought of begging, or going on the parish. I have rich relations, as you know, but they have all turned their backs on me, since your misfortune. So, I am very glad you are come."

"And all these sufferings are the consequences of my evil destiny!" exclaimed Seaton, in a voice of deep des-

pair. "Better—far better—had I never been born!"

"Oh, say not that! Oh, say not that! your memory has been very dear to us," returned Uncle Philip, "and when your mother departed, and immediately after her death, your little sister was taken from me, I had no one on earth to cling to but you; and now, my boy, my dear boy, I am blest beyond measure, to clasp you to my heart once more before I die."

"Talk not of death," returned Charles, in thrilling accents; "the worst is past. We have survived the frightful struggle, for such long years, that brighter days must yet await us. Much is already won, when we are again united."

"You are right, Charles, very right. We won't fall into a sorrowful mood, when, in truth, we have great cause for rejoicing. And Amy must help me to spread the table, and we will eat together once more. Whilst the fish are frying, you must tell me all that

happened to you, for it is now many years since I received any tidings."

"My story is very brief," replied Seaton, with more sternness than he had yet spoken. "Labour, slavery, and disgrace, on the one hand—silent endurance, and fixed resolve upon the other. Since our cruel relatives sent out my sister to the colony, I have had some moments of pleasure, and some gleams of hope—for she made a friend on her voyage, who took an interest in my fate. He placed her, at his own expense, in a decent family, where her education was not neglected: he obtained permission for her to see me at stated times—and, finally, he furnished me with the means of returning to England."

"And who was this good Samaritan?" inquired Uncle Philip.

"He is called Vernon, and is one of the first law officers in the colony."

"Heaven will reward him!" murmured the old man.

"I told him my whole story," continued

Seaton, "and, strange to say, he believed what I related."

"Blessings on his head," exclaimed Uncle Philip, "he must be a rare specimen of humanity; for common men are ever more prone to believe evil than good of their fellow creatures—above all, when they are unfortunate."

"He enquired most minutely into the particulars of my sad story; and he gave me several important hints, and very valuable advice as to my conduct on my return to England, by which I hope to profit."

"And what course do you intend to pursue?" demanded Uncle Philip.

"I must seek justice," returned the sufferer, in a deep, stern voice. "I must unravel the secrets of my enemies; not to take revenge for the horrors they made me suffer, but fully to substantiate to the world my entire innocence of the crimes for which, for the last fourteen years, I have endured unmerited punishment. No, they

have not broken my spirit, even yet! they have not extinguished my honest pride in my good name!" he added, whilst his eyes flashed, and his noble person seemed distended by the strength of his emotion; "they have not yet robbed me of all those I love; and, for them, even, if not for myself, I will struggle till my dying hour, to clear my name from the vile stains they have attached to it, and to leave it as pure as I received it from my fathers."

"Have you money, Charles, my boy?" inquired Uncle Philip, with unusual gravity. "You may talk, and reason, from this time to the day of Judgment—you may be as innocent as the babe unborn, but trust me, without money, you will never make anybody believe it."

"How should I have money," answered Seaton, bitterly. "It is only wonderful I have found enough to travel home."

"Then you had better be quiet! stay where you are—dig the garden—plant cabbages in content, like a philosopher as

I am. I lost my money, my best friend, when I was young and foolish, nephew, and for aught the world cared, I might have died of starvation. When I was rich, people praised my learning; when I was poor, they said it was useless; when I was rich, a host of friends pronounced me very clever—when I was poor, they were sorry my education did not fit me for any of the good livings, and snug places, they had to give away. When I was rich, and sent presents of baskets of trout, they lauded my skill as a sportsman, and gave me good dinners I did not want; when I was poor, instead of buying my fish, they cut my acquaintance. I could not fight my way through such a world; and sick of hypocrisy, I came hither to dig in the garden, and fish in the brook; and thus I kept your poor mother and myself from starving."

"You were bred tenderly, Uncle Philip," said Seaton, with a look of affection at the old man, "and you were of a trusting

and loving nature, and doubted not those who betrayed you to ruin; but I, on the contrary, was born poor; and during the last fourteen years I have been in a fearful school, which is alone sufficient to teach an honest man, who survives such a probation, to struggle bravely with the world. There was a time for submission, but that is past, and I were indeed the despicable wretch the law asserts I am, if I did not devote my whole energies, and talents, and life, to establish my innocence, and regain my lost position in society. Believe me, there are other powers besides money, which can conquer in the world; powers, with which despair, and a sense of right, endows the mind, and these are mine. Cowards shrink before them, and even money is inadequate to oppose them. But no more of that—I am only a mite amongst the thousands who drag on a life of unmerited suffering, on the face of this fruitful globe! You too, have had much to bear. Is it possible

that my poor mother was abandoned by all her wealthy relatives, in her last sad hours?"

"Oh no, not by all," answered Philip, with a bright smile. "There was one who never deserted her, and without whose help, she must have died of starvation; and yet, poor thing, she risked much to befriend us."

"And who may have been this charitable friend?" inquired Seaton, whilst a slight tremour in his voice, betrayed his deep interest, in this apparently, unimportant question.

"Grace Dalton," was the old man's reply.

His nephew heard him, but he sat for several minutes buried in profound thought.

"Grace Dalton," he repeated at length, "is she yet unmarried?"

"Some say she is engaged, but her uncle with whom she lives, never allows any one to approach the house."

"You do not mean that she lives with Mr. Dalton?" demanded Charles, in a hurried voice.

"Yes! her mother died about ten years ago, and the old man was left her guardian, so, as she had no other relative in the world, but you and Martha Graves, she went to live with him, and a dreary life she leads, poor girl."

Seaton made no reply, and after a brief silence, he reverted to the subject of their own affairs, and they passed the time in earnest discourse till their humble dinner was concluded. He positively refused Uncle Philip's entreaties for him to remain, as he well knew it would be impossible for him to obtain work where he was known, whilst the wages of the gardener, sufficed at present to maintain himself and Amy. In the meantime he insisted upon Uncle Philip's accepting the few shillings he possessed, and promised to return as soon as he had any good news to bring. The old man insisted upon accompanying his

nephew and niece, part of their way to the town, and having laid aside his fishing boots they set off on their walk.

It was pleasant to hear the old man whistle and sing, and repeat broken sentences aloud to himself, of which the only intelligible words were snatches of an old song, "We mortals are made of frail clay," and, "Let us all be unhappy together!"

"I thank heaven, Charles," he said at last, "my old humour has come back to me, and I can whistle and sing once more. I have done neither, since you left us, but your return has taken a heavy load from my heart."

And thus they went on together; the old man, who knew that the dreams of his youth could never be fulfilled, contented with present pleasure, and without hope save for mercy beyond the grave; the young man though he had already been severely taught how withering to the passionate heart is the struggle of life, still trusting ardently in the future, whilst his active

brain, with undiminished energy, devised a hundred ways of attaining the objects, on the possession of which, he still believed, the whole value of existence depended. But though their feelings were thus in many respects different, they were united by the ties of early affection and perfect confidence, and they parted unwillingly on the banks of the same rivulet where they had that morning met.

CHAPTER IV.

Oppressed with grief, oppressed with care
A burden more than I can bear
I sit me down and sigh
Oh life ! thou art a galling load,
Along a rough, a weary road
To wretches such as I.
Dim backward as I cast my view
What sickening scenes appear.

BURNS.

THE night after Seaton and Amy returned to old Joe's cottage, the rain fell in torrents,

but about eleven o'clock on the following morning, the clouds cleared away. The wet pavement of the town began before long to reflect dimly the sullen rays of the sun, which, half veiled by thin grey clouds, gleamed over the high houses.

In one of the most aristocratical, but dullest streets of the town, three or four poor people who apparently did not possess the luxury of an umbrella, and half-a-dozen ragged children, whose only school was the highway, had taken refuge from a sudden shower, under a wide doorway leading into a dirty and unwholesome alley. At the first ray of sunshine the young party ran out with a shout of delight, to renew their sports in the streets, and in two minutes they were balancing themselves on their hands, with their heels in the air, with a noble defiance of the mud.

Nobody heeded them, except a tall, grave man, who, by his dress, appeared to be only a few degrees above themselves in the infinitely divided scale of our society.

"They are as happy now, as the children of the rich," he thought, as he paused and regarded them, with profound interest, "for they are innocent, and they are free; yet it is a fearful thing to see creatures endowed with a soul, left in the richest country in the world, to grow up without help, or protection, amidst vice and ignorance, exposed to the contamination of crime and the temptations of poverty. The educated and the rich have indeed great duties to fulfil, towards their fellow creatures, before even the most flourishing states can justly boast of their civilization."

Other thoughts, probably of a dark character, then passed over the mind of the stranger, for he sighed deeply, and apparently forgetting the ragged tumblers, he pursued his way. But he had not proceeded far when he suddenly stopped before a large house, with a handsome portico, and a balcony running the whole length of the five windows on the first floor. The name of Graves on the door, left him no doubt

that this was the place of his destination; but still he hesitated for a few minutes before he mounted the stone steps of this noble mansion. Painful feelings were struggling in his heart, and in spite of a preformed resolution, he shrunk from demanding admission. But Seaton's strong mind quickly regained its composure, and ringing the door bell, he stood apparently tranquil, awaiting the answer to his summons. One or two foot passengers glanced carelessly at him as they passed. No one came, and Seaton rang again.

It is one of the most common occurrenrences in life, for the poor man to wait before the rich man's door, and yet this was no common incident in Seaton's life. It appeared to him, to be the point on which his destiny was to turn, for good, or for evil, and during that pause of expectation, it was in vain that he endeavoured to master the agitation of his breast. Wounded pride, the sense of wrong, of unjust suffering, and the remembrance of withering disappointment, all thronged

upon his mind, but the hope which had brought him thither, supported him. He at length heard approaching footsteps in the hall; the door was opened, and a very smart servant, in a very smart livery, after surveying him from head to foot, with infinite disdain, asked him saucily, what he wanted?"

"I wish to speak to Mrs. Graves," replied Seaton, tranquilly.

"My mistress sees no beggars, who are not recommended by the Rector, or some of the first gentry," said the footman.

"I am no beggar," was the reply.

"Then you are a dun, I suppose, which is much the same thing," was the saucy answer.

"Your mistress is surely rich enough to have no fear of such visitors," said Seaton, calmly.

"Then tell me at once, what is your business," rejoined the domestic, "I cannot show people in threadbare coats, into my mistress's drawing-room, without knowing first, what they want."

"That is no concern of yours," replied Seaton, in a tone which made the man regard him with astonishment, but still he held the door obstinately half closed, so as effectually to obstruct the entrance.

"Who is that you are speaking so saucily to, James?" enquired an old woman, who now came out from the dining-room.

"Oh, Mrs. Giles," answered the footman, "it is only an impudent fellow, who insists on seeing my mistress, whether I will or not."

"And who told you, to deny my mistress to any one, without my permission!" said the old woman, in a very sharp voice, whilst, all the time, she kept her eyes steadily fixed on Seaton's face. "So you want to speak to Mrs. Graves, Sir," she said, addressing him in a tone of respect, which astonished the insolent footman.

"I should be glad to see her alone," was Seaton's reply, and he cast a glance on the housekeeper which she seemed fully to understand.

"Then follow me, Sir," she returned,

and leaving James half bewildered, to shut the front door after the entrance of Seaton, she led the way up a magnificent staircase to the first floor. She from thence suddenly turned aside into a narrow passage, leading to the apartments at the back of the house.

"Mr. Charles," she said, after she had looked round, so as to be certain that no one was within hearing. "I know you, Sir! oh dear, dear, that I should live to see you so forsaken like! but yet, thank God, you are alive, and back again. All may yet go well."

"We must hope, Margery," answered Seaton, pressing the old woman's hand.

"Yet, one word Sir! has Miss Amy come back with you?"

"Yes—she is well."

"Ah, Sir, you should not have come to this house? no one remembers either of you here, but poor old Margery."

"We shall see!" was his reply. "I wish to speak with your mistress, if possible, alone."

"Here is a gentleman wishes to speak to you Ma'am," said Mrs. Giles, throwing open the door of an elegant boudoir, where a tall, stout, handsome woman, was sitting on a sofa, with a piece of embroidery in her hand. She was very richly, but gaudily attired, in purple satin, with a profusion of trimmings, and a huge broach, like a pole screen, at her throat, and a very small cap on the back of her head. She was as fashionable a figure as milliners and dress-makers could produce, when an unlimited purse commands them. She had a wonderful air of easy assurance, but an experienced eye could have detected in an instant, that she was neither born nor bred a gentlewoman.

Everything that folly and fashion had sanctioned in the boudoir of a lady of distinction, for the last five years, was crowded into that small apartment. The sofa was loaded with cushions, embroidered, knit, and braided, of every shade and pattern; a

gaudy table-cover—bought at a fancy fair—because it had been worked by a duchess, or her maid, was spread on a table perfectly loaded with fine bound books and smelling bottles, and fancy pen-wipers, and fancy inkstands. The chairs were of every form and shape, and all embroidered in various degrees of tasteless, gaudy, patterns. A stand of flowers stood in the widow, a new novel lay open on a stool, and three lap-dogs jumped up from the rug, and began to bark furiously at Seaton, the moment he crossed the threshold.

He paused an instant—but he heeded them not; he was endeavouring to trace in the middle-aged woman, surrounded by luxury before him, the features of one whom he had last seen, young, thin, and in comparative poverty.

On the announcement of a stranger, Mrs. Graves arose with great dignity, and surveyed such an unusual visitor to her bou-

doir, with a very ungracious stare of insolent curiosity and displeasure. Their eyes met; yet she failed to recognize the playfellow of her childhood—for he was yet more changed than she was. He had been toiling and wasting, for fourteen years, in the shadow of care, whilst she, basking in the sunshine of luxury, had, meanwhile, known nothing but self-indulgence and enjoyment.

"Martha, have you forgotten your cousin, Charles," he said, holding out his hand towards her, as he advanced.

"Charles Seaton! my dear Charles!" she exclaimed, with all the joy of one who sees a friend of her youth unexpectedly before her.

But in another moment, a cloud passed over her brow; she let the hand she had taken, fall; she coldly resumed her place on the sofa, without requesting Seaton to be seated, and regarded him with a very haughty air.

"I am surprised at this presumption," she said, "after what has passed."

Seaton looked silently and earnestly at her, and she bent her head overpowered with shame and confusion, beneath the poor man's glance.

"I ought to have expected this," he said, at leugth, with a bitter smile, "but I was weak enough to deceive myself by the hope that even the rich merchant's wife would remember the affections of her youth, and the gratitude she owed my mother for the very bread of life. But it was folly; I should have known, that vanity and luxury, can stifle the best feelings of the heart."

"Charles Seaton," returned the lady, whilst the blood mounted to her face, and her voice trembled with rage; "this is shameless audacity. After you have brought disgrace upon me, and all your relatives, by crimes, I wonder at your matchless boldness; to come here and thrust yourself upon my privacy in this insolent manner,

and reproach me, because, by my husband's honest endeavours, I have done better in the world than yourself! You must be conscious that your very name is a reproach and a dishonour to me—and that I should never dare to show my face in society again if it were known, that I received the visits of a returned convict."

"And that convict, your own cousin! The son of her who cherished you under her roof, as her child, and divided with you the scanty bread of her daughter," returned Seaton. "But shame on you, Martha—shame on you! You once had a kindly heart; and, I trusted you would never have forgotton my mother's love; but now, you are a proud, fine lady and drive her son—with insults—from your door, to starve, for aught you care! Shame, on you, Martha!"

Seaton was right; Mrs. Graves had a kindly heart; and though her feelings were dulled by vanity, her worldly prosperity had not been of sufficiently long duration to

extinguish them entirely. In her hours of pride, there were many uneasy moments, and many mortifications, which made her look back with regret, to her simple but happy home, beneath her poor Aunt Seaton's roof; and the reproaches of her visitor, awoke, not only these remembrances with full intensity, but certain feelings of remorse, which not unfrequently embittered her solitude. His words sounded like the echo of her evil conscience; and overpowered by different emotions, she covered her face with her handkerchief, to hide her confusion.

"I am not—I never can be ungrateful to your poor mother," she returned in broken phrases; "I would help you if I could, but my husband has commanded me, in the strongest language, never to hold the slightest communication with you—nay, never even to pronounce your name—and were he to find you here—"

"How am I to believe this, Martha?" interrupted Seaton; "even after the law had

condemned me, he generously persisted in giving me the strongest assurances that he was entirely persuaded of my innocence; and that he would leave no means untried to prove it to the world, and to procure the reversion of my sentence ?"

Martha shook her head.

"He used to talk thus before you left England," she said, "but he changed afterwards. He told me, the deeper he searched into the affair, the stronger proofs he found of your guilt—proofs, which were so painful to him, that he thought it better to let the matter rest where it was; and endeavour, if possible, to forget it; for it was a disgrace to my family, which, the richer we got, people would be ever more ready to rake up, without our doing it ourselves. This was the reason, why, after your mother's death, he insisted on my sending out your young sister to the colony, as it was impossible to take the little girl to live with me."

"She brought a letter from your husband with her," returned Seaton, speaking slowly and distinctly, in a tone that had something heart chilling, "in which he informed me that my mother had appointed our uncle, Dalton, the child's guardian; and that she was sent to me by his order, and at his expense, with an emigrant farmer from the west of the county."

"No doubt, Mr. Graves's information was exact," answered the lady, in some confusion, "but it was an unpleasant affair; and I spoke as little as possible to him about it; and as to Mr. Dalton, I have never once dared to pronounce your name in his presence. We thought, when your sister was with you, you would never more think of returning to England; but would remain to hide your shame, and gain an honest livelihood in the colony. Indeed, Charles, you would have acted wiser had you done so."

"You were very kind and considerate,

to endeavour to get rid of me in this manner,' was the stern reply, "but I happen to disagree with you. No doubt it would have been very agreeable to some of my relations, who think more of the opinion of society, than of the sufferings of an honest man, condemned, unjustly, to drag out a life of banishment and disgrace amongst felons —had I remained to die unjustified; but I could not forget that I had been robbed of my home, my friends, my country, my future hopes in life, and of my good name; a good name, which I received from my father without a stain, as my sole inheritance—and which, by God's leave, I will yet live long enough, to leave, without a shadow of reproach, to be engraven on my tomb."

"Indeed, nobody would rejoice more than Mr. Graves and myself, if you could prove your innocence," said the merchant's wife, who, having recovered from her first strong emotion, was more anxious than ever to get quietly rid of her troublesome

visitor as quickly as possible, "only my husband says, after so many years, it will be quite impossible, and would only bring the whole affair fresh again into the public mind, which would make people talk, and would be very distressing for your relations, whom it is your duty to consider."

"And pray, Madam," demanded Seaton, with calm haughtiness, and infinite disdain, "what have my relations done for me, that I should submit to perpetual, and withering disgrace, to save their honourable names, from being the theme of babbling tongues? that I should submit to see my young sister pine away in poverty and solitude, involved in her brother's dishonour? that I should drag on the remainder of my life, an outcast from decent society, and a vagabond beggar, whom no one will employ? No, Madam, I owe you and your husband nothing; the balance of obligation is all on your side; you have chosen to obliterate the reckoning,

and trust me, I shall never call on you for payment. You need have no fears on that score!"

"But indeed if you are in want of money, my own, and my husband's purses, are open to you," said Martha, with the vulgar feeling, that money is all things to the poor.

"I thank you for your charity, but I need it not," was the reply. "I am not humble to accept of alms. I had once talents that sufficed for my support, and during the last fourteen years, these hands have been used to ruder toil. Had you carried your gifts to the death bead of my bereaved and broken hearted mother, I should have thanked you, but from those who owed her so much as you did, and yet left her to perish, neglected, and in want, I would not accept a crust, were I dying of hunger by the wayside. Oh, Martha, you have been careless and cruel, where you ought to have been a minister of kindness and consolation!"

"I durst not disobey my husband's commands," murmured the lady.

"I will not inquire the cause, for it is too late to repair the evil," returned Seaton, "I will not inquire whether you have been led to forget the best qualities of your nature, by the evil influence of another, or by your own vanity and folly. I know already too much, when I know from your own lips, that you left my mother in the day of misfortune and sorrow, without offering her, either the comfort of your sympathy, or the assistance of which you must have known she stood in need ; and that you, who when left penniless by your bankrupt father, were received under her roof, to save you from menial service, returned her charity by sending her orphan daughter in the charge of strangers, exposed to all the dangers and sufferings of a long sea voyage, to a penal colony, where none awaited to receive her, but a brother who was in chains. Martha we were bred under the same roof, and I came

hither, in the hope that you could acquit yourself of any share in such deeds; I trusted you could prove your innocence of such ingratitude, but you have failed in this, and you need have no fear, that you will ever again be troubled by the presence of the poor convict. His path lies far remote from the ways of vanity."

"I assure you, you see matters in a very wrong light," returned Mrs. Graves with certain feelings of remorse, which she was not so hardened, as entirely to subdue, "and I am sure, we shall be always ready to assist both you and Amy, if you will only leave this place, and go somewhere under a false name, where nobody knows you."

"Again, I repeat, I came not to ask your charity. Miserable woman, poor slave of vanity, and money, you are more to be pitied than I am. My journey is now clouded and dark it is true, but there is a pure light which shines before my trusting heart, and leads me ever on, to better

things in this world or the next; you, on the contrary, are hurrying through life, in the full glare of luxury, vanity, and pleasure; but take heed, these beams are often suddenly quenched, when the path is most beset with dangers, and they leave no sanctifying influence to comfort or sustain. If you forget your God, Martha, and the duties he imposes, in the glitter of the world, you will full surely pay the penalty of your selfishness, even before your journey upon earth is accomplished."

The tone in which these words were pronounced, was even more impressive than the solemnity of the words themselves, and Martha Graves shuddered as she listened, for she felt them to be an evil prophecy, which would sooner or later be accomplished.

For one moment, the clouds of vanity were dispersed from before her eyes, and she saw the truth of life like a revelation. It was a fearful glance, for it revealed how far she had gone astray, and she uttered a

faint wailing cry, as if for help, and mercy. But Seaton had already departed, she remained alone to weep, for at least a quarter of an hour, over the days of careless innocence they had once passed together, joys long forgotten in the bustle of dissipation and the hurry of wealthy society, but which in the hour of self reproach, appeared brighter and more precious than them all.

The arrival of a host of gay visitors, soon dispelled this unusual gloom, and before poor Seaton had regained his home, his very existence was forgotten by Martha Graves, whilst discussing the scandal of the town, and neighbourhood, and making arrangement for her appearance at a fancy ball at the Assembly Rooms, in the character of Anna Boleyne.

The remembrance of her cousin's very disagreeable visit, first recurred to her mind, about three o'clock in the morning, whilst she was undressing after a gay party at the Mansion House, to the great

annoyance of her husband, whom her arrival had awakened out of his first sleep.

"I have to be up at five o'clock in the morning," he grumbled, "to go to town about that confounded railroad, and election business."

"Well then, my dear, as I shall probably then be asleep," said Mrs. Graves, "I will tell you a piece of news now, which will greatly surprise you."

"Confound your news! Women are always chattering," grumbled the banker.

"But this is really news that will interest you," persisted the lady. "Charles Seaton has returned alive and well!"

"The d—l he has! how do you know that pray?" demanded Mr. Graves, raising himself in his bed, with a look of consternation and curiosity.

"Because he has had the audacity to pay me a visit this morning."

"What, here, in this house?" Impossible!"

"In my own boudoir ; just about noon, yesterday," was the wife's reply.

"The fellow must have impudence for anything. What did he say to you?" demanded Graves, eagerly. "I suppose he talked to you about his innocence and all that kind of stuff."

"Certainly. As you may suppose, according to his own account, he is a much injured, ill used man, and we are heartless barbarians, for being ashamed of him," replied Martha, with a disdainful laugh.

"And what did you say to him ?"

"That I did not believe a word of his fine protestations, for you had learnt much more against him, than came out upon his trial, and had often told me, if justice were done, he ought to be hanged, so that he had better take care, never to come near the house again."

"Right, quite right," answered the husband, "and I hope you have given strict orders for him not to be admitted, should he return."

"Certainly," said Mrs. Graves," we cannot be disgraced by a fellow like that, who comes to claim our relationship. The servants would soon spread the story over the whole town, and then I may give up all hope, of ever being noticed by the county society."

"The rascal must be sent out of the kingdom again, in some way, or another," answered her husband. "But I will think of it; do you know where he is to be found?"

"No; I asked him no questions," replied Martha.

"It is little matter; he can soon be discovered if necessary when I return; so now good night, my dear."

And Mr. Graves turned, as if to sleep, but sleep was effectually banished from his eyes for that night, by the intelligence he had received from his wife. The knowledge that Seaton was again in his neighbourhood, awakened, not only many disagreeable re-

membrances, but certain anxieties and apprehensions, which he vainly endeavoured to tranquillise, by various plans for the future.

Mr. Graves was a man whom no one thoroughly understood, and no one quite liked, although his manners were not disagreeable and he appeared to be very frank. Mr. Graves was considered a very rich man, and certain persons had not yet forgotten that he had once been a very poor one, although it was a point of which he appeared himself to retain no remembrance. His father had been successively a fisherman, a smuggler, and the proprietor of a small privateer! His mother had kept an alehouse for ship captains, in a miserable alley leading from the port. Here the lad's education began, and he here first learned the value of money, whilst playing at cards, on a three legged stool. People called him a clever lad, and he was sent to school. His father died, and one of his father's sea-

faring friends got him into Mr. Dalton's banking office, to run errands. In ten years' time he was second clerk, and had married Mr. Dalton's orphan niece, Martha. This girl's mother had run away with a handsome young farmer without a shilling; both took early to drinking, their means were soon exhausted, and at the end of twenty years they died, and left their daughter without education, and without a shilling. Then it was, that Mrs. Seaton had received her under her own roof, though herself the widow of a poor but respectable curate, and living with her two children on a very slender income, derived from the generosity of her brother, Mr. Dalton, the rich banker. Charles Seaton was soon after taken into the office of his uncle, and there became acquainted with Graves, who from time to time accompanied him on his visits to his mother, who resided in the village of Linton. Martha was clever, handsome, and moreover the niece of the wealthy Mr.

Dalton, then a widower, with an only child; and Graves, more from the hope of becoming a partner in the bank by his connexion, than from any real love to the girl, paid his addresses and married her. But he did not thereby obtain the object he had in view, for Mr. Dalton loved his nephew, Charles Seaton, as a son, and had long resolved to take him, as soon as he was old enough, into the firm, and the young man, from whom he had not concealed this intention, was generally believed to regard his uncle with the affection and devotion of a son. It was whispered in the town, that Mr. Graves, whilst professing the greatest attachment to poor Charles, had left no means untried to corrupt his morals; it was long believed that these evil efforts were without success, till the terrible event occurred, which was followed by the young man's trial and condemnation to fourteen years' transportation Mr. Dalton was broken-hearted, and soon afterwards withdrew from the

bank, of which Mr. Graves became, as he had desired, the active partner, and at the end of ten years the sole proprietor, Mr. Dalton having taken his name from the firm and devoted himself entirely to the management of an extensive colliery, of which he had long been possessed.

Mr. and Mrs. Graves paid him many visits, and spared no pains to stand well in his good graces, but they were never exactly sure whether they succeeded or not; although they endeavoured to make the world believe that there was no doubt they were to be his heirs. In the meantime the speculations of Graves extended every year with advantage, and his mode of living increased in luxury. He had a fine house, a fine carriage, and gave great dinners, but neither he, nor his very fine wife, could get into the very best society, either of town or county. His manners were not coarse—his origin might have been overlooked—but people doubted his principles, and a certain vulgarity hung

about him; of which being unconscious, he could not shake off; it was the vulgarity of the soul. He was utterly incapable of a noble, or a generous feeling, and though he had tact enough to endeavour to conceal his selfishness, and to veil his ambition, under a show of hospitality, nobody came to his fine dinners, except men of his own class, a few men above him, who had need of his money, or those beneath him, who were glad to profit by it.

This mortified him exceedingly. He had no other means of attaining consequence, but by money; and when he found that impotent to place him on a level with men of family, and education, he sought to console his self-love, by the supposition that his wife's relationship to a transported criminal, was the ground of his being excluded from the society into which he vainly endeavoured to push his way.

It was not wonderful, therefore, that the return of the convict deprived him of his night's rest, and that his mind, during his

subsequent journey, was greatly occupied by plans, for getting rid, a second time, of a man, whom he regarded, for many reasons, as a serious obstacle in the way of his future prosperity.

CHAPTER V.

Already one strong hold of hope is lost,
Fled, like the sun eclipsed as noon appears,
And left us darkling in a world of tears.

BURNS.

THE manner of Seaton was hurried and agitated, as he returned towards his home. For a time he was unconscious that his compressed lips and gathered brows betrayed the strength of the feelings which made his heart beat wildly, and the quick pulses throb almost to bursting in his temples. He was unconscious of all around

him. Long accustomed to contempt and injustice till he believed that he could support all the insults that society could heap upon him, with apparent tranquillity, the proud man's heart was now at length stung by mortification, beyond his control; and indignation and contempt mingled with the bitterness of his pangs.

Seaton was innocent, and yet the shadow of guilt then hung so darkly above his head, that the consciousness that he was pure in the sight of Heaven, for the first time, failed to sustain him under the condemnation of the laws and of his fellow-men; and despair blighted the future, as disgrace had withered the past. Seaton's nature overflowed with benevolence and love. In the midst of his severest trials, he had ever endeavoured to believe, that they were rather the consequence of a strange combination of untoward circumstances, than of human wickedness, or injustice, and had ever prayed that his heart might not be hardened by misfortune to

misanthropy, or malevolence. Amidst his weary years of sufferings, his love for all that is beautiful, in spirit, and in form, had brought him many hours of solace. Even amongst the degraded beings with whom it had long been his lot to mingle, he had delighted to find and foster some trace of virtue; above all, he had cherished the remembrance of his youth, of its pure and trusting dreams, and of the friends whose precious love he had then believed it impossible to lose. Yet now a time had come, when not only his early visions, but his early friends proved untrue. This conviction was the bitterest pang he had ever yet experienced. He doubted all mankind, and as Martha Graves had forgotten her affection for her cousin, in the pride of prosperity, he no longer doubted that all who had once professed to love him, had equally learnt to regard the convict with indifference, who for fourteen years had been banished ignominiously from their sight.

A feeling, even more painful than despair, forced tears from the proud man's eyes. Wounded in his best affections, he felt, for the first time, overwhelmed and powerless longer to struggle against his dark and evil destiny. The world appeared to him, like a dark prison—from which, he would have been joyful to escape. Even the consciousness of innocence, seemed then to him, of little value, and he regarded death as the only solace for his sufferings.

He saw the throngs in the busy streets rushing past him, or laughing and talking with each other, full of animation and interest, and hope; but in his heart, all was cold, and cheerless, and dead; he was an outcast, and an alien from the society and affections of men; and there was neither love, nor sympathy, nor hope, for him.

With such dark thoughts he hurried on, till he gained the summit of a hill above the town, where, on the open common, only

a few children were to be seen at play. As he gazed over the wide prospect visible from thence, towards that point of the horizon, where lay his early home, and the village church-yard, where his parents slept in peace, he was first conscious that his eyes were dimmed by tears. He thought of his mother, who had been brought, by his evil destiny, with sorrow to the grave, and he wept; but no longer for his own trials. A light had broken upon the darkness of his oppressed heart. The form of his young sister arose like an angel between him and despair.

"I must endure patiently for her, if not for myself," he thought. "She shall not perish, like my poor mother, under the weight of my ignominy and dishonor. Yes, my poor Amy loves me still! Her very existence depends upon mine; and for her I must live; for her I must triumph over the weakness of my own nature; I must forget myself, and those rebellious feelings, which only add to present misery."

Charles Seaton passed his hand over his brow; tbe heavy weight which had oppressed his brain, was not removed, but it was lightened. He felt it was his duty to support, without murmuring or repining, whatever might be the will of Heaven, and resolved to bear all with patience, even though hope had deserted him, he returned to fulfil his day's work in old Joe's garden.

He continued, for the next fortnight, to pursue the same occupation with unremitting activity; but though the old man, delighted by the industry and intelligence of his new workman, endeavoured to persuade him to become a permanent associate in his professsion, the mind of Seaton, unknown to the simple cultivator of cabbages, was ceaselessly engaged in devising means to discover, and bring to light, that convincing evidence of his innocence—which, he trusted, in spite of the lapse of fourteen years, must yet exist. Every day he hoped to discover some clue, by which to direct his researches,

—and though he was glad, in the meantime, to have an employment by which to earn his daily bread, offers much more tempting and advantageous than those of old Joe, would have failed to induce him to compromise his liberty. Moreover, it pained him deeply to see his sweet sister performing all the offices of a servant in the gardener's cottage, though he was, at the same time, proud of the gentle patience with which she fulfilled her humble tasks.

Nothing was a trouble—nothing was a difficulty to Amy, which she did for her brother; and the cheerful piety and love which animated her slightest actions, imparted a beauty even to the menial offices of life.

The old gardener, who was a truly religious Scotchman, felt this—and when the young girl read aloud to him his favourite chapters of the Bible, her soft voice gave a deeper meaning than he had before per-

ceived to the words of Holy Writ, and awakened such pure and holy thoughts in his heart that he regarded her as a being of a totally different race, from all with whom he had, hitherto, come in contact. It was not from the beauty of her delicate person, that he judged she was well born; but from her character, the practical purity of her piety, whose labours were love, and her high moral cultivation, which, even this untutored son of nature, could feel and respect.

"Heaven is kind to send such a messenger to me, in my old age," he thought, "to teach me, how its love can purify."

It was not wonderful that Seaton was solaced and supported in his trials by the society of such a gentle, cheerful creature, as Amy, or that his anxiety to place her beyond the reach of shame and reproach, as the sister of a felon, became daily more intense. He knew, though her spirit was

strong, her frame was weak—and though now cheerful amidst poverty, whilst trusting that his innocence would shortly be established, he dreaded what might be the effects of disappointment or of insult, on one of her susceptible nature. He suspected also, there was another cause for anxiety in the young maiden's heart, which had never been spoken of between them—and which, perhaps, she was unwilling to acknowledge even to herself. But still, though he had returned to England expressly to establish his innocence; and he was most eager to commence the work—foiled and disappointed by the reception given him by Mrs. Graves, and the absence of an eminent lawyer, to whom he had brought a strong letter of recommendation, he toiled on for nearly three weeks, without having decided on what steps he was next to take. He shrunk from being recognised by any of his former acquaintance, in his present position, and he dreaded to lay further claim to the friendship of those whom he had once

trusted, lest he should find that others, he had long loved, were equally as faithless as his cousin Martha had proved herself to be. He went, therefore, little into the town, and Amy never passed beyond the garden.

He was, meanwhile, too much engrossed by his own thoughts, to observe that, for some days, the manner of old Joe had entirely changed towards him. But his sister was more quick-sighted ; and finding herself alone with the old man one morning early, before she began her work, she determined to ask for an explanation of his conduct. But before she had broken silence, Charles unexpectedly entered in search of his tools.

Old Joe, instead of returning his morning salutation as usual, looked at him so disdainfully from head to foot, that Seaton could not fail to observe it, and aroused, in an instant, he haughtily demanded what he meant.

"I mean, master," returned the gar-

dener, sternly, "that there is no need for you to handle either spade or shovel of mine again; and that the sooner you leave this house the better."

"I was not aware I had offended you," said Seaton, calmly.

"You have done worse," answered the old man, "you have offended the laws, and a returned convict is no company for an honest man like me. Had I known sooner who and what you really were, you should never have set foot across my threshold."

"I have asked no hospitality from you," returned Seaton. "You offered me work, and I have fulfilled your tasks to the utmost. The labourer is worthy of his hire. I can find work elsewhere."

"I doubt that," said the gardener. "Your character once known, there are not many who will like to have anything to do with you, more than I do! And yet, who could have thought it, with that pretty, innocent girl, too!"

"Before I leave your house," said Seaton,

who disdained to be offended by his host's conduct, "will you, at least, tell me, on what authority you presume to bring such accusations against a man whom you never beheld in your life, till I came recently hither."

"On the authority of my landlord, Mr. Graves, the rich banker, who married your own cousin. When I went, three days ago, to pay my rent, he told me he understood I had got a lodger, whom I would do well to get rid of, as soon as possible, or that I must cease to be his tenant; for he could not keep persons on his property who harboured condemned criminals."

"Especially when they happen to be cousin-german to his wife," said Seaton, with a bitter smile.

"That was exactly what I thought," returned the old man. "I would have given you warning to leave the moment I returned home, but whenever I looked at the poor girl, my heart failed me. But now the

story is getting about, and all my neighbours are asking me, if I am not afraid of having my throat cut, and such like, so you must be off, and there is an end of it. I cannot let you remain another day."

"Have no fear that I shall longer annoy you by my company," was the reply of poor Charles. "In five minutes you shall be at perfect liberty to inform Mr. Graves that your disreputable guest has ceased to dishonour him by his presence here."

Amy, who trembling and anxious, had stood during this scene, with her tearful eyes fixed with earnest love upon her brother's changing countenance, hurried to her little chamber as he pronounced these words; and, in a few minutes, returned ready for departure, and carrying a small bag, that contained all their wardrobe.

"You are ready, dear Amy," said Seaton, when she re-appeared; "then we will wish Mister Joseph Black good morning; and

thanking him for the kind reception he gave us, we will add our earnest hopes that he may live to repent having driven a houseless and persecuted man from his door, even at the recommendation of the rich banker, Mr. Graves."

So saying, he slightly touched his hat, and drawing the arm of Amy through his, they left the cottage together.

Old Joe followed them to the threshold. There was something in the quiet manner of Seaton, which made him doubt if he was doing right. He would gladly have taken Amy by the hand, and spoken kindly to her, before she left, but he dared not; he felt awed by her silence, and the quiet dignity of her sorrow, as without murmur, or reproach, she accompanied her brother.

The agony of the young girl's heart was great, as she walked along in silence by Seaton's side, and from time to time cast an anxious glance upon his troubled face. She had never before seen him betray such intense mental suffering, and she was too

much terrified by the spectacle of his passionate agony, to venture to utter a word of consolation.

When they reached the bottom of the hill, Seaton paused, and for the first time, the remembrance that he had a home to seek, broke the chain of terrible thoughts that had till then occupied his mind. In another moment, he pressed his sister's hand in his, and looked in her eyes with a searching glance of sorrow and despair, as if he feared that even she must prove unfaithful to him, under such repeated insults and mortifications. Amy partly understood the glance.

"Dear Charles," she said, "never forget that you are innocent, and that with God's pleasure, the world shall yet know that you are so, and acquit you of all shadow of blame."

"Yes, I am innocent," returned the persecuted man, with a deep sigh, "and what a fearful thing must guilt be, when the appearance of it only, is visited so heavily.

Oh, Amy, were it not for you, I should be tempted at times to give up this cruel combat against opinion, the battle of honest pride against injustice and slander; but courage—courage. Now, when the first agony of this new wound is past, I feel as before, that both for your sake and my own, I must not die, till I can leave an untarnished name. I will live to prove to those who now despise us, the fallacy of appearances, and to replace you in the position where you were born. But no more of that; we must first look for another humble lodging, and then I must endeavour to find some new way of earning our daily bread, for my purse is very scantily furnished."

"Let us go to the east end of the town," answered the girl gently, "as far from old Joe as possible, for no doubt he has already made himself busy, in recounting our history to most of his neighbours."

Seaton approved of this idea, as he knew there were many poor streets and courts,

at that mercantile part of the town, where cheapness and concealment were most likely to be found, although it pained him deeply, that his fair young sister, should be compelled to support the dirt and wretchedness of such a dwelling place.

It was still very early morning, and in the principal streets of that populous city, which at mid-day were crowded with gay passengers and equipages, scarcely a shutter was opened, and few persons were to be seen, except a sleepy maid, here and there trundling a mop before a door, or handing to some humble friend, a well filled pail, or basket of her master's provisions over the iron rails.

The most enthusiastic admirers of the beauties of nature, in England, rarely leave their beds till the charms of the morning and its sweet reviving airs have passed away. They resign these luxuries to the poor, and prefer the blazing lamps of midnight theatres, and the stifling atmosphere of rooms, crowded to suffocation, to the

spectacle of the rising sun, or the odours of the dewy fields.

The way was long which Amy and Seaton had to pass, and when they reached the more commercial and humbler part of the town, there was more movement, and the bustle of active life was gradually reviving. Decently dressed clerks, in somewhat soiled linen, were gliding from the doors of neat, little, one storied houses, to tread the same path, they had trodden every day for years without number, and to earn their daily bread, by the same occupations which had been the business of their lives, and would be their constant task till age or death cut short their accustomed toil. Shabby dandies, with a cigar in the mouth, with somewhat of a rakish air, betraying the dissipation of the past night followed, but more irregularly and with unwilling steps, towards the commercial offices; fishwomen in their strong primitive woollen garments, went hurrying along with baskets on their heads or backs,

and tattered children began to creep from the dirty alleys to sit along the walls in the sunshine, hungry and unwashed.

The murmur of the reawakening city, every moment gathered strength, as the great flood of life once more resumed its onward and mysterious course. Seaton paused, and listened awhile in silence to this vast and solemn sound, so profoundly awful to a thinking and benevolent mind, fully sensible, how many voices of sorrow and of vice are mingled there, and of the sufferings of thousands of unknown beings, who live but to gain their daily bread. He felt that there were even greater trials than his own upon the face of the earth; and though this sad conviction did not console him, it impressed him yet more deeply with a sense of the duty of patience, and perseverance, and resolute activity, in the battle of life.

But again they hurried on, and on, friendless and houseless, scarcely knowing whither to direct their steps. They had not, that

morning, broken their fast, and as they passed along one of the back streets near the principal market, they stopped before one of the coffee-shops, there already opened, half inclined to take advantage of the cheap refreshment it offered. But it was already full of workmen and low women, between two of whom a violent dispute was going on, and Amy shrunk from entering. Before, however, they had passed the door, it was rudely flung open, and a policeman, whom they had not before observed, came out leading a woman in trumpery and soiled dress by the arm. Her hat hung back crushed and disordered from her neck; her hair was in tangled confusion, and her flushed cheeks and bright eyes glowed with fever, not with health. She was one whom misery, and, perhaps, vice had made desperate; though the traces of dissipation were fearfully written on her haggard features, the remains of beauty were still there, and all combined, presented a spectacle it made the heart sick to gaze upon.

For it was beyond all human aid. Even riches, piety, and benevolence would have been powerless to save. It was too late. She was followed by three other females who differed but little from herself in appearance, and two cartmen stood laughing and mocking them, as they left the shop.

The prisoner had scarcely passed the threshold, when her eyes fell upon Seaton. Shaking off the hold of the policeman she made a sudden spring towards him, and clapping him rudely on the back, cried out, with a wild laugh—

"Bless my heart, are you there again, my good fellow? Have you come back across the herring-pond to England, to speak a good word for an old friend in need?"

"What do you want with me, woman? I know nothing of you," returned Seaton, regarding the wretched creature who thus addressed him, with loathing and disgust.

"Not know me, Charles Seaton! nay,

that wont serve your turn," she bitterly and scornfully replied, "you cannot have forgotten Lucy Forrest, the sexton's daughter at Linton. For shame, Mr. Seaton! why since you were tried and sent to the colonies for robbery, you are one of us, and have no more the right to be proud whatever you might have been once."

"Woman, let me pass," said Seaton, sternly, and he endeavoured to push his way between Lucy and her companions.

"Oh, yes! pass, pass to the gallows' and welcome," she returned, with a laugh of derision, in which the other females joined, "and take that pretty girl with you, if it pleases you! *I* was prettier far than her once, though you were so saucy, as to despise my company, but you were a fool, Charlie, an obstinate fool, and you have lived to repent it. Ah, I could have told you things, fine stories—more than you dreamt of, when some good friends were flattering you. I might have saved you a

long journey perhaps—but no matter now!"

"Woman, what mean you! What could you have done that would have changed my destiny?" demanded Seaton, eagerly, forgetting the gathering crowd around them.

"Mean, sir, that you were a fool; and that you have paid for your folly; but if you will give me two sovereigns—"

"Come along, woman; we want no talking," said the policeman, now interfering. "You must come along to the office, and answer for your part in last night's fray!"

So saying, he again took her by the arm.

The woman gave a faint cry and called Seaton to her assistance; the other females fell in a body on the policeman, and a struggle ensued—during which, Amy and her brother hurried, unobserved, from the street, and continued to walk on with the utmost rapidity, without once turning to look be-

hind them, till they were far beyond the sound of the tumult.

This contact with vice had fallen on poor Amy, like a new form of misfortune—a new form of humiliation.

"Charles, can it be possible that you really know that wretched woman?" she, at length, in trembling accents, demanded of her brother.

"At first, I did not recognise her," he replied; "she is so fearfully altered during my absence. But we lived in the same village when we were children, and she was a servant in my uncle Dalton's house, when I was arrested and brought to trial. Vanity had, I believe, even then, led her into evil, and you have seen whither the progress of vice has reduced her. Vanity, dress, and vice; disappointment, drinking, and reckless infamy—such is the history of multitudes—such as she is, in our great cities."

"And is there no way to save, or to help them?" demanded the innocent girl.

"A few charitable efforts are made," returned Seaton, "but too late to be of use, whilst thousands fall unheeded into the dark abyss; and of all those who flattered them to their ruin, not one bestows a penny to aid them in their misery, or utters a soothing word to diminish the horror of their lonely death-beds. The authors of their destruction go unpunished and unreproved, whilst these poor victims perish by a fearful progress of degradation, the outcasts of society. There are fearful secrets under the mantle of civilization and social diseases, which nothing but the exercise of truly Christian love can cure. But though many talk of this Heavenly principle, few, very few, understand it aright; and yet, fewer are prepared to make those sacrifices, which its pure observance requires. Hence all the evils of society."

Long after Seaton had ceased speaking, they continued their way until they had left the busy part of the town behind them,

and entered a short street of humble appearance, where there was evidently so little passage, that the grass grew thick between the paving stones.

A paper stuck in the window of a poor, but decent-looking house, announcing that lodgings were to let, here attracted their attention. After a few minutes of consideration, Seaton knocked at the door of the humble dwelling. It was quickly opened by a decent, elderly woman in widow's mourning, who civilly demanded their pleasure.

Their wishes were soon explained, and Mrs. Price, the landlady, conducted them, without loss of time, up a very narrow stair-case, to the two small garrets which she had to let. They were miserably furnished, but very clean, and the rent was so low as to suit exactly the state of Seaton's finances. He engaged them therefore without hesitation ; and Amy, who was pleased by the appearance of Mrs. Price, declared she was perfectly contented. She made no

difficulties, but at once set about rendering her new home as comfortable as its poverty permitted. By her landlady's help she, before long, placed a warm breakfast on the little deal table, for herself and her brother, and whilst they partook of this humble meal, she exerted all her efforts to cheer poor Charles with brighter hopes for the future.

"Why should we make ourselves unhappy, dear brother," she said, "as long as we can earn enough to eat and drink, and pay our lodgings. It is only waste of time; so let us be content and do the best we can. You will soon get work, I don't doubt, and now I have not old Joe's house to keep clean and in order, I shall have plenty of time to earn a little money also."

"In what way, dear Amy?" inquired Charles, with an incredulous smile. "For those who are without protection, it is no easy task to earn money, in the crowded state of society amidst which we live."

"I can make lace, as they do in Flanders," answered the girl. "I have still my thread, and pins, and cushion, in our bag, and I have no doubt I can sell it in some of the shops. I will try at least, and it always makes me happier to be at work."

"Heaven bless you," murmured Seaton, "it is well you think so, for young as you are, you have known nothing of what the idle call pleasure!"

"I desire none of their costly amusements," answered the girl laughing, "only when you get employment, I will ask you to take me out of the town sometimes, on a Sunday, as long as the summer lasts. It will cheer our hearts to see the fields, and to breathe the fresh air, after we have been looking at smoky houses for a week."

"Yes, employment!" returned Seaton, without replying to the rest of her words, "I must find employment, and that quickly."

In pursuance of this object, the young man went out into the streets, and upon the quays, but not only that day, but during the rest of the week, his search was vain.

CHAPTER VI.

Yet, let not this too much, my son,
  Disturb your youthful breast;
This partial view of human kind
  Is surely not the best!
The poor, oppressed, honest man
  Had never, sure, been born
Had there not been some recompence
  To comfort those who mourn.

BURNS.

THOUGH Charles did not speak again to his sister, of the unfortunate woman

Lucy Forrest, he had not forgotten the strange language she had addressed to him. The more he thought of her words, the more meaning he attached to them. For the first time it struck him, that this woman might be acquainted with some important circumstances connected with his destiny, and with truths directly opposed to the evidence she had given against him, on his trial. With eager anxiety, therefore, did he pursue his search for her, even whilst in quest of work. But here also disappointment awaited him. All he could learn concerning her, was, that she had been brought before the police magistrate and set at liberty, the morning he had met her, but she had since then disappeared from her usual haunts, and no one knew whither she had gone. If she had thrown herself into the river, no one, except Charles Seaton, would probably ever have enquired after her.

His efforts to obtain work were not more successful, than his search for this lost

creature, When he found that he could get no regular employment, he sought to carry loads, where the ships wers unloading; he walked miles out of town, to meet the drovers who were bringing cattle to market, in hopes of earning a few pence by driving sheep or oxen; he went to every place where he thought a sixpence was likely to be earned, but his gains at the end of the week were very small indeed. A boy might have been more successful, but people looked with suspicion on a man at his time of life, who sought employment without character, or recommendation. He and Amy ate very sparingly during this time, but when their landlady at the end of seven days exacted her rent, he was left with only one shilling in his pocket.

The following day the brother and sister made only one scanty meal of potatoes, but as Seaton was as unsuccessful as before, in his search for work, it was evident that the small contents of their purse, must soon come to an end.

It was the first time during his long struggle with misfortune, that Seaton was reduced to the absolute want of daily bread. He had hitherto relied on his own powers, and his own industry, to earn at least the means of existence, but now he was denied the exercise of either. There appeared a brand stamped upon him, which excluded him from the circle of human sympathies, and human activity. He saw all around him active, cheerful and prosperous ; all working in concert, as if bound by an invisible chain, in pursuit of one common object—money! But they had no need of him. All had their friends and associates, whom they had known for years, but he could claim no aid, from his former acquaintance. They were those whom he most dreaded to meet. He was worse than a stranger in the land of his fathers. Had he been formerly really a criminal, misery must now have driven him to still deeper crime.

Let those who in the full enjoyments of all the comforts which wealth can give,

enact, or execute laws against vagrants and beggars, remember, how fearful are the sufferings of the poor; how desperate is the despair of the wretched father, who hears his children cry for the bread his strong arm can no longer earn ; how fearful must be the sufferings which harden the mother's heart, till she weeps not for the children she lays in the grave. Let not the rich be deaf to the cries of impatient suffering, which burst at times from the troubled hearts of the poor, nor let them believe that partial relief, nor idle pity, are all the duties required from those in power, towards their suffering fellow creatures. Their whole condition must be changed, not out of compassion, but for justice.

The welfare of all must be considered by legislators, and not the advantage of certain classes alone; morals must be cultivated by education, as well as talents, and the rights of the poor, protected as much as those of the rich. The inequalities of

social life are fearful, above all when its extremes are contrasted with each other; when the body is perishing for hunger, the voice that talks of patience, and a reward in a future life seems to insult, but cannot comfort the impatient indignation of despair, or check the recklessness of suffering which sets the laws of society at defiance.

Such dark thoughts and ethics of a similar character, passed through the overwrought brain of Seaton, as he sat in his desolate abode, and watched poor Amy, twisting in silence the bobbins on her lace pillow. She was paler and thinner than in other days, and his heart beat faster, as he gazed on her, for he too well knew the cause. But though the poor girl suffered deeply, though she saw with heartfelt agony, that the strength of the strong man was wasting daily away under deprivation and mental suffering, she uttered nó complaint, and weeping only when alone, she endeavoured in her brother's presence, to maintain an appearance of cheerfulness. She worked

as long as daylight lasted, at her lace; she fixed her eyes anxiously on Seaton's face every time he returned from the town, but she never asked him if he had found work, and strove ever to persuade both him and herself, that Providence would not leave them to perish of want, in that city of abundance. As a last resource, she said, they could go to uncle Philip, who would at least share with them, the vegetables of his garden.

But this resource, Seaton shrunk from adopting, till all other hopes were at an end. He had important reasons for wishing to remain in the town, and he could not support the idea of becoming a burthen to the poor old man.

He earned a shilling that week by carrying a parcel, and Amy went in the dusk of the evening and pawned the only shawl she possessed. The rent was paid by a similar sacrifice of the few spare articles of attire, which Seaton had till then preserved.

Both knew that this was their last resource; but still they never uttered to each other, the dark, sad thoughts, which filled their minds.

Famine now stared them in the face. Amy never complained, but she had become so weak, that she could no longer support herself the whole day long, at her lace pillow, and her eyes often failed to guide her in the work. To make their sorrow and their suffering more bitter, a piano frequently accompanied by a male voice, and sometimes by three or four in cheerful chorus, sounded in the room beneath them, the whole day long.

At length they were without a farthing. They arose and dressed themselves, but breakfast they had none. The feelings of Seaton were such, as we forbear to describe. There was a sternness in his manner, which Amy had never seen before, as he took her hand, and said, "I will go out till noon, and if I then return without work, we must

try to walk over to Uncle Philip, for by Heaven I cannot see you starve, and neither can I beg."

The girl saw that tears stood in his eyes, as he turned away from her, but though she wished to speak words of comfort to him, she had lost the power. When he had left the room, she rested her aching head on the table, and wept bitterly. But the young cannot long despair. Fresh hopes, like a gushing fountain of reviving waters, spring ever up before them, amidst the wilderness of sorrow to solace and to save, and thoughts like the whisperings of a guardian angel chequer their grief, and sustain them amidst the heaviest trials, and thus it was with Amy ; gradually she became more calm ; the trust of her innocent heart in Almighty Goodness, again revived, and strengthened by prayer, she endeavoured to resume her lace work.

She had sat at her pillow for nearly half an hour, when she was surprised to hear

steps upon the stairs, followed by a knock at the room door.

Before she could arise, it was opened from without, and a stout, well dressed, gentlemanly looking man, about five and forty, appeared on the threshold.

The heart of Amy leaped within her. She felt for a moment assured, that help in an unexpected form, was at hand.

"I beg your pardon," said the stranger, smiling blandly, as he seemed to hesitate whether or not to advance, "but I was told I should find Mr. Charles Seaton here!"

The girl who had arisen, and advanced towards the door, shrunk back with fear when she heard the tone in which these words were pronounced, and observed, the glance of searching curiosity which the gentleman cast, first on her, and then around the miserable chamber. Her hopes were instantly annihilated; the stranger's countenance expressed neither benevolence,

nor compassion, but disgust, at the poverty he witnessed, mingled with a certain triumphant satisfaction. Amy felt that his smile was insulting, though he smiled very blandly, when he asked her in direct terms, if he were right in supposing that Mr. Charles Seaton lived there.

"He lives here," she replied, "but he left home some time ago."

"How unfortunate," returned the unknown. "I have been seeking for him during the last fortnight, and only discovered his residence yesterday, by accident. I presume you are his sister, and you can probably tell me at what hour I am likely to meet with him. I wish to see him on business of very particular importance—importance to himself, I mean."

"Who shall I say has done him the honour of a visit?" inquired the girl with a mistrust, for which she could not have accounted to herself.

"Oh, that is of no consequence," re-

turned the unknown. "When do you expect him?"

"At twelve o'clock," was Amy's reply.

"Ha! twelve o'clock! then I will call again; at one—cannot come before—on business, very particular business, you may tell him. Till then, I have the honour of wishing you a very good morning."

And placing his well brushed hat upon his head, the plausible gentleman went away, smiling as blandly as he came.

The landlady was waiting for him at the bottom of the stairs.

"May I be so bold, sir," she said, with a low curtsey, "I hope, sir, they are the people you want?"

"Yes, Mrs. Price, yes! I believe so," he replied. "The man is out at present, but I shall return at one o'clock, and shall then be able to tell you better what to do. But keep your eye upon them. Let there be no moving off, till I have seen the fellow;

you shall be no loser depend on that. They are very poor you say?"

"Yes, that is certain," answered the woman. "I dare swear, they have neither of them broken their fast this morning."

"Ah! that is poor enough to be sure," returned the stranger, blandly, "but don't be pressing for your rent, or that kind of thing, Mrs. Price, till I have seen the man. I shall not forget you, and perhaps if you were to give the girl her breakfast this morning it might not be amiss; it would induce her to tell you something about their circumstances. You understand me; so good morning to you, Mrs. Price," and he put a half-crown into the widow's hand.

She curtsied again, and though she accepted the gift, she looked very keenly at the giver, of whose good intentions she began to have some doubts; for she had sense enough to understand, that his interest in her lodgers was dictated by some other feeling than charity.

Mrs. Price's own scanty means had hitherto prevented her offering assistance to Amy in her distress, which she had in some measure surmised, but now, assured of repayment, she immediately hastened upstairs to ask her to partake of her breakfast. The girl was surprised by the invitation, but it was so kindly and respectfully given, and it was so long since she had made a comfortable meal, that she could not refuse, and with a grateful heart she accompanied Mrs. Price to her clean little kitchen on the ground floor.

Mrs. Price, the widow of an old soldier, had been a hard working woman all her life, and had invested her little savings in the furniture of her small house, which she let out to different lodgers. She likewise made a little money by taking in fine washing, and respectable and independent by her own industry, she had the proud satisfaction of feeling, that she had never cheated a creature of a farthing in the whole course of her life.

Her breakfast consisted of nothing but very common tea, a very little milk, and a loaf of brown bread, but it was given kindly, and Amy accepted it with gratitude.

"You see, miss," said the old woman, "I live very plainly, but labour sweetens my food, and you ought to have an appetite for the same reason, for you are always busy I see. But your brother, it seems, cannot get work, poor man!"

"No! he has been very unlucky since we came here," answered Amy, simply.

"But he is not a stranger in the town, I should suppose," rejoined Mrs. Price, "that gentleman who was here awhile ago, knows him, he says, and surely he might help him to something, for he is now one of the richest men we have."

"Perhaps he has heard of our distress, and came to assist us," said the girl.

"I don't know," returned Mrs. Price, sipping her tea from the saucer, "he is not called very charitable."

"But if he will give my brother work,

we shall be very thankful to him," rejoined Amy, eagerly; "indeed we have great need of it, I only wish you wanted some one to help you, to iron the fine laces you have to wash; I could do it, I am sure, to please you."

"Perhaps it would be better, if I could help you to sell the pretty lace you have made," said the old woman, kindly.

"Oh, I should be so glad!" cried the girl. "I should be delighted if I could only get money enough to buy a dinner for my brother when he comes back at twelve o'clock; for indeed it is long since he has had one," and Amy brushed away the tears that filled her eyes.

"Well, my dear, I can promise nothing," answered Mrs. Price, "but I am going this morning to a lady's with some clothes; she is a sweet, kind lady—an angel to the poor—and if you like to get your lace, and come with me, we can try at least, if she will buy it."

With a beating heart, Amy cut her lace

from the pillow, tied on her straw bonnet, and pinning a shawl belonging to Mrs. Price about her, set off with the good woman, who carried a small basket of fine linen.

A new hope had sprung up in the poor girl's heart, and yet she was very anxious, and scarcely dared to think that her expectations might be realized. Poor Amy! the sum of five shillings, which was all she could venture to ask for her work, appeared to her then, to be actual riches. None but the poor know the real value of money; and no one has drained the cup of sorrow to the dregs, who has not tasted the bitterness of poverty; the want of daily bread, and the hope deferred, which maketh the heart sick; when the destitute would willingly submit to the meanest toil, but finds no one, who thinks his labour worthy of its hire. It is a heart-breaking agony to see riches, plenty and enjoyment all around, and to feel perishing of want, without knowing whither to turn for aid.

Amy had felt all this, and though bred tenderly in her early years, her spirit was humbled by neglect and poverty, and suffering, so that she shrunk back with awe, when Mrs. Price at length pointed out to her the house to which she was conducting her.

"You need not be frightened, my dear," said the good woman, observing her agitation, "there are no saucy servants there to turn us from the door. The master made his own fortune, and, I have heard, thinks a poor man as good as a rich one any day. Though he has plenty of money, there is only one maid in the house to attend on himself and his niece. But it is not meanness, for he does a great deal of good to the poor. Only he is not like other people, dear gentleman, and so they say he is mad."

Amy made some slight reply, and followed Mrs. Price through a high wooden gate into a pleasure ground, at the further end of which stood a large, handsome, brick

built house. Many of the upper windows were shut, and smoke arose only from one or two of the chimneys. Yet not a weed was to be seen on the broad gravel walk, and many bunches of old-fashioned flowers were blooming in the little beds near the door. Mrs. Price led Amy round by a back door to the offices, where an old and very respectable female servant, who was making preparations for dinner, received her, as one well known in the house, though she was evidently not pleased to see her accompanied by a stranger.

"Who is that young woman?" she inquired. "I thought, Mrs. Price, you knew my master allows no one to come about the house, but yourself and old James the gardener."

"Is your young lady at home?" returned the widow, evasively, "I should be glad to speak with her."

"You want to beg of her, I suppose," answered old Hannah, shaking her head. "But that won't do, Mrs. Price. My

master wont encourage beggars, and if you begin that trade, you will never be allowed to set your foot in this house again."

"Who told you I have come a begging," said Mrs. Price, flushing as red as scarlet, "I am as honest, and as hard-working a woman as yourself, Hannah, and have no need to beg, God be thanked. But we want to speak to your mistress; this young person has business with her."

Old Hannah looked at Amy from head to foot, as if to ascertain from her appearance, what answer she ought to give to this bold proposition.

"You may go into the little red parlour, my mistress is there alone, but if you take the girl, it must be at your own peril."

So saying, she turned her back to them both, and resumed her work.

The good washerwoman made Amy a sign to follow her, into an adjoining passage in the body of the house.

"If the mistress be like the maid,"

thought the poor girl, "there is little hope for me. And she trembled from head to foot, when, in answer to Mrs. Price's knock at the red parlour door, a soft voice desired them to enter.

No sooner had they done so, than she glanced eagerly towards the lady, who was alone in the room, as if to read her destiny from her appearance. The light of a tall window fell full upon her, as she sat leaning over a small table, fastening up little bundles of work for the poor.

She was dressed in a plain black gown, and small white collar, the simplicity of which well became her tall and beautifully proportioned figure, and enhanced the snowy whiteness of her throat and hands. Her dark brown hair was parted on her forehead, and formed a massive braid like a coronet at the back of her head. Her brow was high and broad, her features delicately formed, and though the bloom of her youth was past, and she was evidently about thirty years of age, her large

soft blue eyes, and benevolent countenance, were still so beautiful, that Amy's fears were relieved, the instant she beheld her.

The girl felt as if she had before seen her; waking, or in a dream she knew not; as if she was gazing on one long loved, and lost; and such a strange and troubled feeling came over her, that she scarcely heard the words, in which Mrs. Price, after a profound curtsey, explained the object of their intrusion.

The lady was also astonished and interested by Amy's appearance, and the voice was very kind, in which she requested her to approach the table with her lace. The girl silently obeyed, for her heart was too full for words. Poverty made her feel as if her brother's destiny, and her own, depended on the lady's approbation or rejection of her work, and a minute passed before she could open her little parcel. Though she knew it not, the feelings of the lady's heart were, during that pause, even more anxious

and painful than her own. But to the girl's disappointment, when she at length held the lace in her hand, she did not look at it, and her eyes remained fixed with an expression of extraordinary curiosity, on the sheet of written paper, in which it had been enveloped. It was an old letter back, directed to her brother. Instead of asking Amy the price of her work, she demanded her name, in an eager and anxious voice.

"Amy Seaton," replied her astonished visitor.

"And you have a brother?" demanded the lady, blushing deeply.

"I have," was the girl's answer.

"And he has left you to struggle alone for the means of subsistence."

"Oh no! He is now, as ever, my faithful protector; but, like myself, he is destitute. He seeks to work, but can find no employment."

"And he is now in the town?"

"Yes, but we must leave it to-day, or

starve," murmured Amy, and the tears which had been gathering in her eyes, fell thick and fast.

"Merciful Heaven, is he reduced to such misery," exclaimed the lady, clasping her hands with a feeling of uncontrollable emotion. Then suddenly turning to Mrs. Price, who had heard and seen all that had passed, with amazement, she requested her to leave the room, as she wished to speak to the young woman alone.

The lady watched impatiently till the door closed behind her, but no sooner was this done, than she hastily arose, and taking the girl's hand in hers, she kissed her eagerly.

"Amy, dear Amy," she exclaimed, whilst her tears fell thick and fast, "you, no doubt, have long ago forgotten Grace Dalton, though she has nursed you often on her knee, and chased you round the gardens and meadows, before your poor mother was laid in the grave."

"No—no! Charles has often told me

about my dear cousin Grace," was Amy's joyful reply, "but are you really Grace, our own kind Grace, whom we have so often longed to see again?"

"Yes; your own true and faithful Grace," was the reply; and the lady clasped the girl in her arms, and after kissing her tenderly, rested her head on her shoulder and wept silently. The emotions of her heart were too powerful for words.

The feelings of Amy at this discovery, unlike those of Grace Dalton, were of unmingled delight and love; no painful remembrances—no sad anticipations clouded the innocent joy of her young heart.

For several minutes the cousins stood locked in each others' arms, till Grace, conquering her emotion, endeavoured to think, with some tranquillity, of the conduct she had now to pursue.

"Amy," she said, "we must not thus lose time. I have a thousand things to ask you. Charles has returned you say—is now in the town—in want—compelled to

seek work—to earn his daily bread—and fails to obtain it! That is even worse than I feared."

"Yet it is too true," murmured the girl. "Those who hear his name avoid him; and those who know him not, will place no trust in a stranger, whom they regard with suspicion."

"And you, Amy—my poor girl, you were sent ont to the land of convicts by a worthless woman; you were deprived of all the fostering cares of a mother's love, and the gentle ties, and decent comforts of your early home; you have yet found friends—you have returned pure and innocent? Yes, I read it on your blushing face. But who could doubt it, when Charles was near to watch over you. Poor Charles, how fearfully he must have suffered!"

And overcome by her feelings, the lady hid her face and again wept bitterly.

"Oh, yes! but the worst is past," returned Amy, "and he has come back to England to prove his innocence, if he can only

find the means of support, till he has collected sufficient evidence."

"He shall want for nothing now," was Grace's reply; "yet it was cruel of him, not to let me know at once of his return."

"Till his innocence was proved he could not presume to do so," said Amy, blushing deeply.

"Oh, yes! I know his proud and noble heart," was the generous woman's reply. "But I need not tell you that I have never believed the charges against him; I place the same full and entire confidence in his truth and honesty, as I did in our early years, and it is fit he should know that I do so. I must see him; we must understand each other, and that without delay. The hope of our re-union has been, for fourteen years, my sole support through countless hours of sorrow and anxiety. But he cannot come to this house—the curse of his uncle, Dalton, rests upon him; for, though he once loved him like a son, his mind was

poisoned against him ; and he believed the evidence of his guilt. He is just and noble, and his indignation and his sorrow were in proportion to the confidence he believed his nephew had betrayed. If you know all, you cannot wonder that I have never dared to mention either the name of your brother or yourself, in my uncle's presence; or that he has cursed the man whom he believes to be the destroyer of all that was dearest to him in life. I dare not tell him that you have been here, I dare not tell him that Charles has returned."

"But you can come with me," returned the girl, eagerly. Charles has promised to return home at noon."

"Take this money," returned Grace, pressing a purse, containing several sovereigns into the girl's hand. "Provide for your immediate necessities, and expect me in less than an hour. I must go to Mr. Dalton and write a letter for him, before I can leave the house for any length of time. It is a painful delay, at a moment so impor-

tant—but my patience has been long tried."

"My brother will not be at home for two hours, at least," replied Amy.

"If possible, I will be there before him," answered Grace.

"Mr. Dalton wants you, ma'am," said old Hannah, looking in at the door for an instant, and then vanishing.

"Do not tell that woman your name, on any account," whispered the lady, pressing Amy's hand in hers; "no one but myself must know that Seaton's sister has been here! Bless you, dear Amy, Heaven bless you; we shall soon meet again;" and the cousins once more embraced each other, before they parted.

Amy then joined Mrs. Price in the kitchen, with whom she immediately left the house, and Grace proceeded to her uncle's library.

CHAPTER VII.

He stands above
All consequences. Work he hath begun
Of fortitude, and piety, and love.
WORDSWORTH.

THE room reserved by Mr. Dalton for his especial use, was very large, and simply furnished; the walls were entirely covered with books, but no ornament of any description, neither bust nor picture enlivened the solemn chamber, where thought evidently presided, to the exclusion of all objects of taste, or fancy.

Mr. Dalton was sitting at a table covered with papers, and laid down a pamphlet he had been reading, as his niece entered the room.

He was a tall, thin man, about sixty years of age. What the loss of youth had taken from the beauty of his features, age had replaced by an expression of profound thought and benevolence, which gave to their fine contour, a charm far surpassing the roundness and freshness of youth. The invisible soul made itself felt, by all whose nature sympathised with purity, and justice, and benevolence. Though not old, Mr. Dalton was a venerable man. Yet ordinary people considered him mad, or very singular, which, with many, synonymous. It was true he possessed an independence of character, an entire freedom from all the prejudices of the existing social system, uncommon even in England, where free institutions leave more liberty, than in other countries, to the unshackled development of character. He examined,

he judged, he thought for himself, without being influenced by the prejudices, or passions, of any particular class. He respected great and eternal principles, and despised all temporary and petty opinions. The objects of his love had been repeatedly torn from him; but the activity of his benevolence was undiminished by years.

After many disappointments, the warmest sentiments of the old man became centred in his niece, Grace Dalton. The orphan child of an only brother, she had resided with him since her father's death, and for ten years had been almost his only companion. Bitter disappointments, seemed to have planted mistrust between him and every other human being, except this noble-hearted girl. The very remembrance of Charles Seaton, and his sister, who were equally related to him, was connected with such horrible circumstances, that, for many years, he had never alluded

to their existence. Martha Graves, the daughter of his second sister, was a person of too common and vulgar a mind, for any sympathy to exist between them; but the earnest, simple, and noble character of Grace, so much resembled his own, that he loved and trusted in her, with the confidence of a father. The readiness with which she resigned all the usual pleasures of her sex and age, to sympathise in his pursuits, and to fulfil his desires, fully justified such an affection.

Mr. Dalton was, in most respects, a self-educated man; the son of a little country surgeon, towards the end of the last century, had not those opportunities of early instruction which now exist; but, luckily for him, he had learnt Latin in a foundation school in his native town, and his own natural talents completed his education in the great school of the world. At the age of thirty-five, he was proprietor of one of the most flourishing collieries in the North

of England, and at forty he was a partner in the richest bank of the town where he resided.

Unfortunate circumstances had subsequently induced him to withdraw his name from the latter firm, but his colliery continued in full activity. It appeared as if he continued in this concern more from a desire to contribute to the welfare of the people he had long employed, than from any desire of adding to his fortune. He was, indeed, supposed to be rich ; but no one could be personally, more indifferent to the luxuries and vanities which riches are prized as the means of obtaining. Books were his chief expense ; and even Grace Dalton seldom presumed to interrupt him during the hours he devoted to study. Contrary to his usual custom, he had, that morning, required her attendance in the library. A smile lighted up his countenance when Grace, in obedience to his second summons, entered the room, and holding out his hand

kindly towards her, he begged her to take a seat beside him.

"My dear Grace," he said, "I must speak with you on an affair in which your interests are deeply concerned. I need not tell you, your welfare is as precious to me, as if you were my own child."

"My dear uncle you have taught me to forget the want of my parents' love," returned the lady, in a voice tremulous from deep feeling, "you have been to me more than a father."

"I have felt for you as a parent, Grace; but you have deserved my love, and you only. You have been the minister of my charities, and the assistant in all my plans for the benefit of my fellow creatures. To you I can confide the completion of my desires when I am in the grave."

"In the grave uncle!" she returned, starting at the words, and her eyes filling with tears. Heaven grant there may be

many—many years, till the grave shall divide us."

"My child," said Mr. Dalton, "both you and I must be prepared at all times, for such an event; and if you shrink from the idea of my death, it is my duty to make it familiar to you; the shaft will not fall the swifter, but the lighter when it comes. Moreover, it is my duty to prepare you for this event, for the sake of others, as well as for your own. You will be my heir, Grace; and it is necessary you should fully understand the duties which will descend to you with my fortune; duties which I consider every one, possessed of similar wealth, owes to his country and his fellow creatures; above all, when that wealth has been the produce of their labour."

"I know your noble thoughts," returned the lady. "The world would, indeed, be happier, if others understood, as you do, the real uses of wealth, but few regard it otherwise, than as a means of individual indulgence."

"I fear I did so once," continued the

old man, "but time, misfortune, and reflection, have taught me fully to understand some of those great Christian truths, which even Christian teachers warp, in their interpretations, to suit the temporary interests and selfish prejudices of the classes to which they belong. I have learnt to know that we are, in a great measure, responsible for the moral cultivation, as well as the physical welfare of all those who pass their lives in labouring, for our profit, as much as for their daily bread. Never forget my child, that your poor labourers are human beings like yourself; and that you owe them more than merely food and clothing for their whole life's toil; remember, that they have souls as well as bodies; and moral feelings, on the development of which, not only their individual welfare and happiness, but the true social progress of their country, depend. There are men amongst them capable of all that is noble and true, and such must not be left without the means of exerting their talents to their full utility."

"Ah, sir," murmured Grace, "it requires a stronger head than mine, to put all your generous plans in execution. A woman is too feeble—"

"She can act by the sweet ministry of love," rejoined her uncle. "You have been my guardian angel, Grace; you will be an angel of mercy to others. I confide in you, as I can confide in no man living. There was once—I trusted him—I loved him—as I had never trusted nor loved till then, and, alas! my child, you know how bitterly I was deceived. I can trust in no man more!" and he hid his face with his hand, to conceal his emotion.

"And yet, perhaps, he was innocent, dearest uncle," said the lady, weeping as she spoke. "Appearances may have deceived us all."

"Grace! Grace! no more of that," cried Mr. Dalton, almost sternly, interrupting her. "How long have I warned you not to indulge such an idea. I clung to it, till the fiat of the judge was pronounced, but

after that, it was worse than weakness. The very memory of the guilty should be banished from our hearts, if we wish even peace upon earth. I know not by what folly I forgot my own resolution, never again to allude to this subject in your presence."

"It was a vain precaution, dearest uncle," replied the lady, with unwonted courage; "believe me the heart can never forget."

"My poor child! is it thus!" murmured the recluse, regarding the expressive countenance of his niece with a searching and melancholy glance. "I have been selfish, and believed I suffered alone, but I see all —I understand all now! I feel with new anguish, how your youth has been blighted by disappointment and sorrow. Yet, angel as you are, you murmured not, and sought only to comfort my affliction. My poor Grace, do not weep! it is the duty of both of us to endeavour to forget, and to seek to do God's pleasure towards our

fellow creatures without repining. Your pure and holy life must bring you peace at length even upon earth, when the remembrance of the wicked will no more trouble your repose."

"Could I believe him guilty, he were long ago forgotten," said Grace, timidly, but anxious to avail herself of this opportunity to speak on a subject, which had long been interdicted by Mr. Dalton; "but the doubt—the hope—oh, sir, you were happier in having neither! and now, even now, I cannot think the worst, for though fourteen years have passed since his condemnation, without anything positive being dicovered in his favour, there are vague reports in circulation, which tend to confirm his protestations of innocence!"

"Fourteen years!" repeated Mr. Dalton. "Yes, it is true, more than fourteen years have expired, and innocent, or guilty, he is again cast upon society without character —without money—without friends. If he seeks to prove his innocence, he will pro-

bably return here; he may apply to you, or to me; but remember, Grace, I cannot see him! I will hear nothing concerning him till he can stand before me fully acquitted of all the fearful charges that have been brought against him. Twice he has written to me—twice I have returned his letters, and I implore you, by every sacred feeling, never to be tempted to hold the slightest communication with him, should he ever presume to appeal to your pity—or your love," and Mr. Dalton fixed a searching look upon his niece, as he pronounced the last words.

"If innocent, as I believe him to be," she firmly replied, "his noble spirit would disdain to ask for pity, whilst justice is denied him."

"Grace!" said Mr. Dalton, solemnly and tenderly taking his niece's hand in his, "this is a very painful subject; to me more than ever so, as I perceive that your peace and happiness are involved in it. But let not your imagination deceive you! the law

has had its course. The accused has been pronounced guilty of one crime; the suspicion of another yet more fearful, is attached to him—oh, Grace, Grace, the very remembrance of the past, is more than I can bear! He is dishonoured; he has proved himself the vilest of the vile, and though it was once the fondest wish of my heart, to see you his wife, I would now rather follow you to the grave, than even suspect that you entertained such a desire."

"I trust, sir," answered the lady, her pale cheeks becoming crimson with emotion, and her voice trembling as she spoke, "I feel sure you know me too well to suppose, that I could ever degrade myself by becoming the wife of a convicted felon! On that you may rely. Luxury and the world's hollow smiles I could renounce, but honour, never!"

"My dear niece," said the recluse, after a pause, "let us endeavour to forget what has now passed between us; I have full

reliance on your noble character, and I cannot doubt that you will do everything right, whatever difficulties may beset you. Let us now resume the subject of my will. Mr. Graves, probably, expects to be appointed my executor; but he is the last man in the world in whom I would place such a trust."

At this moment a carriage was heard to stop, and there was, immediately afterwards, a loud ring at the garden gate.

"See who is there, Grace," said Mr. Dalton, greatly annoyed by this interruption.

"It is Mr. and Mrs. Graves, sir," she replied; "and they are both coming into the house."

"He probably wishes to speak to me," said her uncle, "so send him here without delay. I must consult with you, dearest, at another time. I am obliged to be at the iron works at twelve o'clock, and shall not return till dinner at six o'clock. Heaven bless you, my child. Pray prevent

Mrs. Graves from coming hither; I am in no humour to tolerate her hypocrisy, or the follies she thinks fashionable."

Grace quickly glided from the library, and met the visitors in the entrance hall. After the first salutations were exchanged, she requested Mr. Graves to go to her uncle, and conducted the lady into her own little parlour.

Mrs. Graves was splendidly attired in all the newest fashions, brought by a country milliner from London. Her feathers, and her flowers, and her lace, were exquisite, and the smell of perfume, from her embroidered handkerchief, was overpowering, to those who, like Grace, were unaccustomed to any scents, but those of flowers, and the sweet, fresh air.

"Mercy, child! I cannot imagine how you can live in this dull hole," said Mrs. Graves, casting a look of contempt around her, as she took her place upon the sofa, with all the due respect for her satin gown. "At your age, and with your

fortune, it is perfect madness. You might know all the first people in the town, and you actually know nobody."

"My uncle has no desire for society, as you are well aware," answered Grace, mildly, for she was used to these reproaches.

"Oh, yes, we know that," cried Mrs. Graves, with a pettish toss of the head; "but that is no reason that you should be kept in a jail. Why actually you cannot even see the people passing along the road. What you do to kill time, I cannot fancy! And then your dress, my dear Grace! you might dress decenter, were it only for the respectability of your relations. Everybody is talking about you, I assure you."

"It is a pity they have no better subject to interest them," was the lady's reply.

"They know you are my cousin," said Martha, with a patronising manner; "and really they are sorry, for my sake, that you make yourself so very odd. Lady Giles said, the other day, that it must be

stinginess; but I told her that was certainly not the case, for you gave so much to the poor; but then, as she says, you don't do the thing the right way; nobody ever sees your name in a subscription; you belong to none of the Dorcas committees, or prison inspecting societies, or penitent associations. It is perfect folly to give your money, nobody knows where, and nobody knows why."

"My charities are directed by my uncle, and I cannot have a wiser counsellor," was Grace's reply.

"Poh, poh! your uncle, indeed, I have no patience with your uncle! Let him shut himself up, if he pleases, but he should not make a fool of me, I can tell you! If you were a girl of spirit, you would not lose your best days, for any old, moping uncle on the face of the earth. He is rich certainly, but he has, after all, nobody to leave his money to, but us, so you should do as I do! take your own way, and he

will like you all the better for it, depend upon it."

Grace was shocked, but she made no answer; she would gladly have turned the subject, but her very desire to do so, deprived her of the power.

"I have come on purpose," ran on Mrs. Graves, unconscious of the effect of her discourse upon her cousin, "to make you a charming proposition, which every other girl in the world would jump at; which is neither more, nor less, than to stand at my stall with me, at the Bazaar which we, that is to say the first ladies in the place, are going to hold in the Assembly Rooms. The profits are to pay a Missionary, for the education of the wives of the Emperor of Ethiopia. It will be a very genteel affair, I can assure you, and we are to be patronized by Royalty. There are two Duchesses, Patronesses; one of them has already sent a penwiper made by her own fair hands; and a Baronet's lady will keep

the next stall to mine. Mr. Graves grumbles about the expence; but it cannot be more than a hundred pounds! and what is that, for seeing one's name in the papers, and getting into such fine company, and all that. It will be a mere nothing, particularly if you will join me, my dear."

"I am sorry that will be quite out of the question," answered Grace, gently, but firmly. "I wonder how you could think of proposing it, when you know how unaccustomed I am to display of every description!"

"Oh, but this is charity, you know, my dear, and as nobody knows you, you need make no display, if you don't like it. But I have so many acquaintances amongst the first people, I shall be obliged to be a little decent, so I have bespoken a charming new bonnet from London, and a sky blue satin pelisse; Mrs. Tibbs, the wife of the late mayor, would give her life to get a stall, but it wont do, my dear; a fat,

vulgar, good sort of woman like that, wont go down with fine company, and everybody knows her father was a butcher. Lady Giles declared, that if she had a stall, she would withdraw from the thing altogether. Oh! she is a charming woman, Lady Giles, and was the first to set down my name on the list. She never forgets that I was civil to her, when she was pretty, penniless Betsy Sims, the apothecary's daughter. But now she is rolling in riches, and her husband has been knighted, and so all that is as it ought to be. You really should know her, Grace; her manners are so fashionable, and she wants you so much to take a place at the Bazaar. It will be such a capital way of bringing you into society, she says."

"I thank you and Lady Giles," said the young lady, "but I have no desire to be brought into society, which is not to my taste, and moreover, I take no interest in the education of the Princesses of Ethiopia.

I find objects of charity enough in my own country."

"Oh! it is not that," cried Martha eagerly, "I care no more about the black ladies than yourself, but it is the name, and the fashion of the thing. To get into a certain set, one must be talked about, you know, and seen in proper company, and that is just what is necessary for you, if you intend to marry in a suitable manner, Grace. And, upon my word, you have no time to lose."

"I am much obliged to you; but I have no wish to be talked about; and when I intend to marry, I shall not look for a husband at a fancy fair."

"You are an incorrigible girl," returned Mrs. Graves, "you will never do as other people do; but if you won't take a share in my stall, I am sure you can't refuse to contribute twenty pounds to buy materials for little works to supply it. Mr. Graves won't give me more than fifty pounds,

and I cannot make a proper figure with that."

"I am sorry I must again refuse you," answered Grace, "I cannot give money for an object of which I do not approve, when there are so many of my neighbours, whose sufferings may be alleviated by such a sum."

"Very well—but you can lend it me, then, dear; for I am in a terrible dilemma," persisted Martha, in a flattering tone. "I know how generous and affectionate you are; and it will not be the first time you have assisted me at a pinch. I really cannot appear as I ought to do, if you do not replenish my purse a little."

For a moment, Grace's generous heart was near complying with her cousin's request, but she remembered poor Amy and her brother, and others, who were dependent on her bounty for their daily bread, and she mastered the impulse which she felt was weakness and not generosity.

"I am sorry it is not in my power to comply with your request," was her calm reply. "All the money I have at my disposal, is already appropriated."

"You are a stingy, ill-natured creature," exclaimed Mrs. Graves, arising from the sofa, highly irritated. "You may ask me long enough to take you to a ball or anywhere else for the future, I can promise you. I thought you had a better heart, Grace; but I see you are grown as niggardly as old Dalton himself. But I wish you a good morning; for I have no more time to lose. I suppose it is no use expecting you as a purchaser at my stall, as you will have to pay a shilling admission to the bazaar! So now I must go, and buy my articles upon credit; for I see there is no other way of making as good a figure as Lady Giles. Good morning to you."

And without further delay, Mrs. Graves returned to her carriage, with a profound conviction of having been shamefully treated by her parsimonious relative.

The banker's lady next proceeded to various shops for the ribands, fancy papers, toys, and trinkets, which she considered necessary to furnish her stall at the expected bazaar, with an elegance becoming her position in the fashionable society of the town. Everywhere her equipage and her finery, procured her the obsequious attentions of the shop-keepers, whom she honoured by her orders; and what was still more agreeable to her, their credit.

Everything which was sent home to her, was certainly set down in their books at a higher price than she would have paid, had she gone on foot with ready money in her hand—but then the balance was made up by servility—and credit for six months —which all gave with pleasure—for no one doubted that the gay wife of the rich banker, would pay her bills at Christmas; and a carriage and fine clothes, have a wonderfully imposing effect on certain people.

In the meantime, Mrs. Graves had the appearance of being very fashionable, and

very charitable at the same time, without spending a farthing; and the poor shopkeepers, who supported her extravagance, got no credit at all in return for what they gave; and if they become bankrupts in consequence of bad debts, no one will pity them and their children. The world only commiserates the families of great bankrupts, who have been living, like princes, for years upon other people's money.

CHAPTER VIII.

But whatever fate
Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
And bear thy memory with me to the grave.
WORDSWORTH

No sooner had the carriage of Mrs. Graves driven from the gate of Mr. Dalton's house, than Grace hastened eagerly to prepare for the walk which her cousin's visit had so unexpectedly delayed. Her mind profoundly occupied by the wonderful discovery of the morning, and her approaching

interview with the man, on whose destiny her happiness had long depended; it had required all her angelic patience to support with an appearance of politeness, the folly and impertinence with which Martha Graves had talked of trifling vanities, as if discussing the most important interests of existence.

The danger of luxury when it descends to an uneducated class, the moral blindness it engenders, to all that is truly worthy of esteem in life; and the paltry, social ambition, by which it replaces the best affections of the heart, had never before struck her so forcibly and painfully, as when thus exemplified in the person of Martha Graves.

Grace had learnt from Amy, that Seaton would return home at noon, and she desired to reach their lodging before his arrival. It was then near eleven o'clock—and she was anxious to set off, lest any new obstacle should impede her departure. Mr. Graves was still with her uncle, when she

left the house; and old Mary was so accustomed to her frequent absence from home on charitable missions, that the silent old woman answered only by a monosyllable, when, in passing through the kitchen, she told her that she probably should not return till near dinner.

A joy such as she had never known till then, animated the noble heart of Grace Dalton, as she proceeded rapidly on her way. Whatever others might have done, she had never doubted the innocence of her cousin Charles Seaton. Although she had found no opportunity of telling him so before his departure from England, when she was young and timid, during those long fourteen years, she had gained courage and self reliance from her silent thoughts of the banished man, and his unmerited sufferings. She had felt all the bitterness of his fate, as if she had been a partner in it, and her heart now exulted, at the proud anticipation of proving to him, that he had still one friend in the world, whose confi-

dence in his rectitude, neither calumny, nor injustice could diminish. This short walk was one of the happiest passages of her existence, for what delight can compare to that, which accompanies the activity of the noblest faculties of our nature ; of self devotion, benevolence, generosity, and love.

It was market day, and the principal streets were thronged with cattle. The country people who came to sell their commodities, and the workmen and their wives, who were providing for the coming week. Anxious to avoid the frequent delays occasioned by this confusion, Grace had turned into a quiet back street, at no great distance from Mrs. Prices's, when she was startled by some one coming up quickly behind her, and suddenly laying their hand upon her arm.

She turned instantly, and to her surprise, and somewhat to her consternation at that moment, when she wished to be alone, she saw the strange figure of uncle Philip standing close beside her. He was dressed

as usual, only instead of having his fishing tackle on his back, he carried a heavy basket on his left arm. She knew him well, and the sight of the old man, brought back more forcibly than any language could have done, the remembrance of the youthful and joyous days, when he had been the favourite companion of herself, and his nephew Charles. Though grieved at being thus interrupted on her way, when so near the point of her destination, she could not do otherwise, than answer the old man's salutation with kindness, and then, anxious to escape, she begged him to come to her at Mr. Dalton's.

"No, no, my pretty blossom, that would be useless, now I have met you here," he replied. "I am an old fisherman, and I cannot let a fish off the hook in that way, I can assure you. I have news to tell you —great news—good news—but if you were a fine lady, like Martha Graves, you should not hear a word of it. Fine ladies have enough to do, to think about their

feathers and flowers, they have no room in their little souls, for the cares of another. But you, Grace, have a true old English, sterling heart, and can feel a friend's joys and sorrows as your own—and so I will tell you, for my heart is very glad, and yours will be glad too to hear that Charles Seaton has come home, and I have seen him once more, before these old limbs are laid in the grave. And you must come with me and comfort him poor fellow, for oh, Grace—I would not have him know I think so, but he is fearfully changed."

"Changed!" murmured the lady, scarcely conscious, that she had repeated a word, of such sad augury to all the hopes she had indulged, of finding the friend of her youth, the same as when they parted.

"Yes," added the old man, almost in a whisper, "chains and slavery work fearful ruin. But you will still know him Grace, as I did. I had seen his dark eyes too often in my dreams, to forget them. He has the same bright eyes he had when a

boy—only sadder. He is too proud to weep, but his eyes speak his sorrows; and you will pity him; I know you will, for you always had a kind heart. So come with me. I have two fine trout for him in my basket, which I found at my lines this morning."

"Have you come all the way from Linton on foot?" demanded Grace, glad to find some other subject than Charles Seaton, on which to speak to him, whilst she rapidly renewed her walk with her stange companion.

"I would go to the world's end to serve poor Charles," was the old man's reply; "and I would have been here sooner, if I had had anything to bring him, for he wrote me such a sad letter two days ago, I fear he is very badly off."

"This is the house," said Grace, as with a beating heart she stopped before Mrs. Price's door.

On what trifles does our destiny often depend. To cross that threshold, the lady

felt would change the whole current of her fate, for good, or for evil. The dull monotony, the silent, unchanging anxiety, in which her life had passed during the last fourteen years, were at an end; her repose was thenceforward only to be found in the happiness and the welfare of another. But she did not hesitate, and exulting that the time had, at length, come, when she could prove, to the only man she had ever loved, the full strength of her disinterested love, she followed Mrs. Price, who conducted her and uncle Philip to the garret of Amy, who was impatiently expecting her. Fortunately, the good landlady never suspected that she had come thither on any other than a charitable errand.

Grace, at once, recovered her composure, when she found that Amy was still alone, though, from the girl's replies to the eager demands of the old man, she learned with delight, that she expected her brother every moment to return.

"He went out very sad," she said; "and I am most impatient to see him back, that he may hear all that has happened since then. Oh, if he only knew, who was waiting for him here, he would not tarry so long."

"And if he could guess, what two fine trout are frying for him in the kitchen, he would soon turn his steps this way," said uncle Philip. "Many a rich epicure would go ten miles for such fish, and not enjoy his dinner as we shall do."

"It is long since poor Charles has tasted such dainties," answered Amy, with a grateful smile. "And, oh! Grace, how thankful will he be to you, for coming to visit him, in such a miserable place as this!"

"Yet you have lived in it for weeks, my sweet cousin," answered the lady, whilst tears filled her eyes, as she gazed around the miserable dwelling, and remarked the young girl's endeavours, to brighten, by neatness and the tasteful arrangement of a

few wild flowers, the misery of a place, destitute even of the ordinary comforts of life.

"I have got accustomed to it," was the reply; "and I was so busy at my lace pillow, I often forgot, for hours together, where I was. Had I been idle I should indeed have been wretched, and my long, solitary days, would have seemed endless."

"Yes, my child," said old Philip, solemnly, "never cease to work! labour is like sunshine; it casts gleams of brightness even through the heavy clouds of sorrow. It is true, there are misfortunes in this life, so stunning, that they destroy, for a time, even the power to work; but it returns, and it is the first proof that the heart's deep wounds are healing. I have passed through all this, my child. I knew that if I remained idle, I must perish—and I was content to die, for I had thrown away my youth, my fortune, and my friends, and the world had cast me off. But life is sweet, even to the beggar; and I

learnt to work, to respect myself as a useful member of the society on which I had before been only an encumbrance, and I found happiness, at length, where others, as idle as I had been, supposed I was condemned to irretrievable misery. Yes, my child, labour and prayer are the two best gifts which Heaven has given to us poor mortals. But I wonder what keeps Charles so long!"

"Indeed, I begin to be uneasy," said Amy, glancing anxiously at Grace, whose impatience every moment became more manifest. "There was a gentleman here this morning to enquire after him, and I don't know why, but I did not like his manner."

"Did he say his name was Graves?" inquired uncle Philip.

"Heaven forbid," was Grace's hasty exclamation.

"He would not tell me his name," said the girl.

"Well, well, no matter," cried the old

man. "Charles is an honest fellow, and will prove a match for all such rascals yet!"

"Oh, good uncle, what can you mean?" demanded Grace, eagerly.

"I mean a great deal more than people give me credit for, and I see a great deal further than people believe, for the cunning often deceive themselves in their vast respect for their own wisdom, but a fool sees no more than the truth, and the truth lies in a nut-shell. All the rest of wisdom is selfishness and the delusion of human vanity. It takes a new form every ten years. Our schooling would be soon finished, if we learnt nothing but truth."

"But what is the truth; and what do you know about Graves, that makes you call him a rascal?" inquired Grace, anxiously.

"He may be a very honest gentleman, for anything I know to the contrary," was the old man's reply. "The world says he is very prosperous, but the world always

smiles upon rogues, to their faces; but it plays them many an awkward trick in the long run. Charles may turn the tables on him yet. But hush—hush, there are steps upon the stairs. He is coming, thank goodness, at last."

There was a pause of profound emotion in that little chamber, as the sounds approached, to which Uncle Philip had alluded. The feelings of Grace were too harrowing to have been long supported.

A hand was laid on the lock, the door unclosed, and it was indeed Charles Seaton who appeared on the threshold.

Pale, and worn out by anxiety, mortification and deprivation, his downcast looks, and the dejection of his whole person, bespoke a melancholy, approaching to despair, as he entered the garret, where he dreaded to meet his sister, and to communicate to her the ill fortune which had again, that morning, pursued him. He started with surprise, when he perceived that Amy was not alone; he endeavoured to smile, as he

welcomed Uncle Philip, but his eyes had no sooner fallen on the figure of Grace Dalton, who stood retired, trembling from head to foot, than with a short cry of unutterable astonishment and joy, he rushed past the old man, and seized her hands in his, whilst his whole figure seemed suddenly transformed, and his flashing eyes shone with a light, which before, seemed for ever to have left them.

They gazed long and earnestly at each other, till the eyes of both filled with tears; but neither spoke. They seemed to have lost the power of speech, whilst crowding thoughts rushed wildly through their minds. Each read the history of their long separation, of their sufferings, their fidelity, and their love, on the countenance of the other, till at length, forgetful of all things else in the world, Grace, weeping, dropped her head upon Seaton's shoulder, whilst he pressed her with ardent affection to his heart.

"Heaven bless you, my children!" mur-

mured Uncle Philip, deeply affected by a scene so unexpected, "this is all as it ought to be."

Recalled to a consciousness of the presence of others by this quaint observation, Grace gently released herself from Seaton's embrace, but he still held her hand in his, and those who had seen him a few minutes before, could not have believed that it was the same desponding, half broken-hearted being, who then addressed her in accents of exultation and joy.

"Noble, generous creature!" he said, "the slanders of my enemies have been heaped so heavily upon me, that I feared they had destroyed even your confidence in my innocence. But it is not so! you love me still, dear, dear Grace, as you loved me in other years. I see it, I feel it with delight too strong for words, but from my soul I thank you!"

"Poor Charles!" she murmured, "how great must have been your tortures, before you doubted me!"

"Yes fearful," he replied, and again both were silent, but that silence was happiness.

"You have been here in my neighbourhood long, and in difficulties—nay, in actual want—yet neither sent, nor came to me," said Grace, at length, in a soft voice of reproach.

"Had I been able to prove my innocence, I would have flown to you without a moment's delay. But that satisfaction is yet denied to me," he mournfully returned. "I could not demand charity and pity for a degraded convict, from her whose love I was once proud to possess."

"Dear Charles, believe me, I have never doubted you, or you would not see me here," replied the lady, with tender firmness. "I was not able to tell you so, before your departure—nay, I was too young to act with decision—but now my part is taken. Were you prosperous, I should not have sought you, as I now have done, but in misfortune, I could not leave you to be-

lieve me untrue, and I should be weak and unworthy of your love, if, from any false delicacy, I failed to give you the assurance, that I never have, and never can believe it possible, that you had the slightest knowledge of the crime, for which you were tried and condemned. Trust me, you have true friends, whose love has only been strengthened by your afflictions."

"You are a very lucky fellow, Charles," said uncle Philip, gravely interrupting his nephew, as he was about to reply; and as a confirmation of Miss Grace Dalton's words, I beg to inform you, that I have brought you two fine trout, which, by this time, are fried for your dinner. I have sent Amy down stairs to fetch them, for if you are not hungry, I am exceedingly so. You and your cousin, have a great deal to say to one another, no doubt; but from all I have heard, I think it may be as well for you, to eat first, and talk afterwards, or, perhaps, if time presses, you can do both at the same time."

At this moment, the door was thrown open, and Amy, followed by Mrs. Price, entered the room, bearing a comfortable dinner, purchased with the money the former had received from her cousin, with the accompaniment of uncle Philip's fish.

Even Grace could not refuse to take her place at the table, when all was in order, and tears of gratitude to Heaven, for such an unexpected change in their fortunes, filled the eyes both of Amy and her brother, as the old man, with heartfelt solemnity, called down a blessing on the simple, but abundant meal before them.

"Let no man lose his confidence in Providence, even in the deepest affliction," said Seaton. "In the darkest hour, when every hope has disappeared, the angel of mercy may be keeping watch above him, to open, after his long trials, a way of brightness and of peace. An hour ago, had I been told, that I should now be here, with such loved friends around my board, that the idol of my heart, the

being, the remembrance of whom brightened even a convict's sufferings, would come with devotion and love, like a ministering angel, to console and comfort the persecuted and convicted criminal, I would have scoffed at the idea, as a vain delusion. Now, even now, I scarcely dare believe in the reality of my happiness," and covering his face with his hands, he remained some minutes lost in thought.

"It is all dear Amy's doing," said Grace, cheerfully. "Her little lace pillow has worked miracles; and if you will listen patiently, you shall hear the whole story. Tell your brother, Amy, all that has passed."

In simple and touching words, the young girl recounted the story, to which Seaton and uncle Philip listened with almost equal interest.

"Providence, all Providence," exclaimed the old man; "the highest presiding wisdom, guiding man, unconsciously, to accomplish the purposes of its mysterious

will! Good and evil, are only different wheels in the great machine, which is working for some vast end, futurity may, perhaps, reveal to us, but till then, we must be content to perform, with faith and humility, the tasks which destiny assigns to us! Happy are those whose labour is the labour of love!"

Whilst Uncle Philip was thus holding forth on his favourite topic, Grace and Seaton discoursed in a low and earnest voice, concerning the past and the future. Though the lady was anxious to learn all that had befallen her cousin, since his departure from England, he passed with an unconquerable feeling of shame, very lightly over the sufferings he had endured as a convict!

"The first bright gleam which had cheered my degraded existence," he said, "was the arrival of dear Amy, who came over with a farmer's family, to whose care she had been committed by her heartless guardians, immediately after

my mother's death, and with whom she continued to reside, after they settled in the colony—about half-a-mile from the barracks, where I was condemned to labour. Fortunately, she had made a friend on her voyage. This was Edward Vernon, with whom I was formerly at school. He had not forgotten me ; and when he learnt that the child, whose beauty and innocence had excited his interest during his long voyage, was my orphan sister, he generously made arrangements to procure her as good an education as the colony afforded. He obtained permission to visit me, and showed a deep interest in my story. Those only who, with uncorrupted feelings, and the habits of virtuous and cultivated life, have, for many months, associated with none but the vicious and uneducated beings, whom civilized society, after having contributed to their ruin, either by the despair of neglected poverty, or the vices of luxury, casts from it, like evil weeds, to rot and perish

in their corruption on a distant shore, none but an innocent man, who has been a convict amongst convicts, can justly understand how precious to me, was this unexpected communion with a man of education and worth. Vernon held a law office in the colony, and possessed of talents of the highest order, his humanity and benevolence are not less remarkable. Speedily convinced of my innocence, he endeavored, by the closest cross-examinations, to discover some circumstance from my answers which might direct him to detect the real criminal, should he return to England before me. But his official duties detained him longer in the colony than the term of my punishment. On my departure, he gave me a letter of recommendation to his father, who is Recorder of this town ; but unluckily, the old gentleman has been absent on business in London since my return."

"But your friend, Edward Vernon, if I mistake not, is expected to arrive in Eng-

land, in a very short time," rejoined Grace, with her eyes still fixed anxiously on Seaton, so that she failed to observe the crimson blush which covered the face of Amy, at this unexpected intelligence.

"Most ardently do I desire that this news may be true," was Charles's reply, "Without his assistance, I see not how I can unravel the cruel web of deception in which I have, no doubt, been involved, to prevent suspicion falling on the real criminal."

"At one time there were some strange tales in circulation," said Grace, "but, for the last five years, they have all died away. People appear to have forgotten every part of the story, except your condemnation."

"My poor Charles," murmured Uncle Philip, "no pains would have been spared to procure your acquittal, but you and I both lacked gold; and so the world has turned its back upon

us; but never heed it Charles, there are better things, even upon earth, than hollow friendship. We never see truth clearly, stripped of all her social trumpery, till we are poor and independent, and content. Truth and love, are worth a king's ransom, but they cannot be bought."

"Tell me what was the substance of these tales," rejoined Seaton, addressing his cousin, without having heard the old man's moralizing. "Even though they may be indistinct, they may serve to direct my inquiries."

"All that I could learn," answered Grace, "was in truth very confused. Do you remember Lucy Forrest, the Sexton's daughter at Linton?"

"Perfectly!" he replied, "and strange to say, I met her the day I removed into this lodging; she appeared either half intoxicated, or deranged."

"The poor wench fell into bad company,' said uncle Philip, "who ruined and deserted her, and then they said her wits

forsook her likewise, so though she may speak nothing but the truth, nobody heeds her. She wanders round the country to beg, and I have often seen her as sane as we are, but, poor deluded creature, her conscience is heavily laden, there can be no doubt of that."

As the old man ceased speaking, Mrs. Price entered the room, and closed the door behind her, before she announced, that Mr. Graves was down stairs, and requested particularly to speak with her lodger.

"Mr. Graves!" exclaimed Miss Dalton, springing from her chair, in astonishment and consternation. "He must not see me here!"

"If you go down stairs, ma'am, you will be sure to meet him," said the landlady, in a low voice; "but if you will please to come into my bed-room, which joins this, you can easily go down whilst he is engaged here."

"No, no, we cannot part thus!" cried

Seaton, impatiently; "tell him I am engaged, that I cannot receive him to-day—anything you like, only send him away!"

"I have done all that," answered the good woman, "but it is of no use. This is the second time he has been here to-day; and he persists, that he cannot leave the house again without seeing you. I hear his step—he is coming up—this way, ma'am—this way," added Mrs. Price, hastily opening a door leading into her own room.

The steps approached; it was evident that if Grace desired concealment she had not a moment to lose, and bidding a hasty farewell to Seaton and Amy, she escaped with Mrs. Price, an instant before Mr. Graves entered the chamber she had left.

CHAPTER IX.

Look now on that adventurer who hath paid
His vows to Fortune—ruthless, undismayed,
And so hath gained at length a prosperous height.

WORDSWORTH.

THERE was not a man on the whole face of the earth whom Mr. Graves so cordially detested as Mr. Dalton. There were many reasons to which Graves, in the secret recesses of his own mind, assigned this hatred, but the direct opposition of their natures was the fundamental cause. Their characters were as hostile as the antagonist

principles of good and evil. He did not, however, acknowledge this truth to himself; he did not know it. His opinion of himself was too high; he affected to despise Dalton, though he always felt humbled in his presence. He regarded him as a foolish visionary, entirely ignorant of the world, who was blind to his own interests, and what was worse, to the interest of other people, which he ought to consider, particularly that of Mrs. Graves who was his own niece, and the only one of all his relatives worthy of regard.

But in spite of these ideas, he took very good care, as he thought, to persuade Mr. Dalton, that he respected him above all men living; not with the servility of one who agreed with him ostensibly in all things, but with the blunt honesty of a true friend, who scrupled not to express his sentiments, and opinions, even when they differed from those of his wife's relative.

When Graves entered the library of

Mr. Dalton, that morning, it was as usual, with the frank and friendly manner, he thought the best adapted to conceal his real sentiments. He never felt quite sure, that that gentleman was deceived, but his self-conceit induced him to hope so.

"How delightful is this quiet," he began, as soon as he had taken his seat. "It is really refreshing, after being tormented the whole morning at the iron-works. I have been making inquiries into a very tormenting affair. A quantity of iron has been again stolen from the storehouse ; in fact there seems to be a regular system of plunder going on, yet we can discover nothing. The wretches all hang by one another, and have neither respect, fidelity, nor attachment to their employers, now-a-days. I grieve to say it, Mr. Dalton, I grieve to say it, because I know you think differently, but it all comes from these confounded liberal principles, which are undermining the very ground we stand upon. Half the fellows in my mills are chartists."

"I think it very likely," was the gentleman's calm reply, "and if you have reason otherwise to complain of them, I tell you candidly, it is your own fault. If they are demoralized, it is not by the liberality, but by the luxury of the age, a luxury which has accustomed men to esteem wealth as the first object of existence, which has rendered the rich selfishly indifferent to the destiny of those by whose labour their purses are filled. Pay your work people better, and they will have no temptation to steal; have some consideration for their comforts and their welfare, and they will neither fail in respect, nor gratitude, towards their employers. They know us better than you believe. They can discriminate between those who regard them as living tools, from whose work the highest amount of profit must be wrung, and those who consider them as part of the great human family, whom one God hath commanded to live together in love; who esteem them as fellow-creatures, who

have moral feelings worthy of cultivation, and often of respect, and claims upon the justice of their employers, for more than the mere miserable means of prolonging existence."

"I know you are an admirer of all this modern philosophy, about social rights, and the rights of labour, and so forth," answered Graves, laughing, "but these matters are too difficult for my comprehension. They are above me, and you must excuse me, if I go on in the old jog trot way, our fathers did before us. I have embarked my capital in certain concerns, and have a right to a certain interest. If I don't get that, I might as well run no risk, but buy land, and plant cabbages at once. If I am to raise my people's wages, I must first be relieved from taxation, or I cannot compete with foreign markets. Without taxation, the interest on the national debt cannot be paid, the public credit is at an end, the country in a state of revolution, and the labouring classes without employment.

Such appear to me the consequences of chartism and liberality."

"I trust it is not necessary to destroy public credit, in order to better the social condition of the labouring classes," returned Mr. Dalton, gravely. "Let traders and manufacturers, be contented with just profits; let them cease to make desperate speculations, and to gamble with human life; let us live simply as our fathers did before us, even in a rank far above ours; and the weight of necessary taxation will be a lighter burthen. Carry this principle upwards, through all classes of society; let the wages of labour be less unequal. The disproportion between the payment of the aristocracy when in the employment of Church, or State, and the payment of the poor is at present frightful, though the one gives, at most, only a few hours of the day, and the other his whole existence for his hire! Were all public servants paid in strict proportion to their merits and their services, our taxes would

be quickly reduced; a mass of folly, and noxious luxury put an end to, and our clergy and men in office, incapacitated from delegating their duties to ill paid hirelings."

"You will get very few men to agree to this plan, I am afraid," said Graves, who at that moment considered Mr. Dalton as little short of a madman. "It is only natural for every man to endeavour to get as much as he can; and as long as gentlemen, who have younger sons to be provided for, have the making of our laws, they will not be such fools, as to cut off their own means of supply in that manner."

"Things may change," was Dalton's only reply.

"Not much more in our time, I hope," returned the banker, with the same affected jocularity as before. "For my part, I think they have gone too far already. What with ragged schools, and ragged churches and lectures for the million, and music for the million, we shall soon have

nothing but accomplished beggars—and set a beggar on horseback, you know where he rides to."

"Yes, happily a great mass of the people have made some progress," answered Mr. Dalton, his benevolent countenance brightening with enthusiasm as he spoke. "They begin to be sensible of their moral wants, and of their own ignorance. That is already a great step towards amendment. They begin also to know their moral force, and it is the duty of every man, who loves his fellow creatures, to endeavour to teach them to use it wisely."

"Oh, keep them down, sir! keep them down, depend upon it, that is the best plan, if we wish to keep our own. The people are spoilt, my good sir! there is far too much fuss made about lodging-houses, and baths and wash-houses for the poor, now-a-days. They forget their proper place, and must be taught to remember it. I wonder what our grandfathers would say about all our fashionable philanthropy?"

"That we are beginning to remember the charity enjoined by Holy Writ," answered Mr. Dalton, gravely, "and believe me, the philanthropy which exerts itself to improve the condition, and elevate the character of the lower orders, is not so senseless as you seem inclined to suppose. If benevolence and Christian charity cannot induce us to believe that these sacred duties have been too long neglected, selfishness ought to do so!"

"Selfishness!" repeated Mr. Graves, with surprise. "I confess I cannot understand, how it can benefit the upper classes, to have the money taken out of their pockets, for the mob, under some pretence, or other, every hour of the day! We pay enough in poor rates without being compelled to subscribe to all the baths and asylums, and heaven knows what, which are got up by a parcel of needy adventurers."

"Yes!" said Mr. Dalton, calmly, "society is in such a position that selfishness ought

to compel the rich no longer to leave the mob, as you call the industrious poor, to work out their own sad destiny, without even the means of instruction, or the power of providing for their days of sickness and old age, or the consequence of such a neglect of social duties, and Christian love, may recoil upon themselves."

"Oh, I am not afraid," returned Graves, laughing, "and when I know that a tax of many millions a year is levied on us, for the benefit of the worthless and the ungrateful, I confess I feel no inclination to diminish my own comforts for the further maintenance of idleness."

"Those who are idle against their will, whether from age, or sickness, or lack of work, must be maintained," returned Dalton. "But there can be no doubt, that where such an enormous annual tax, as we pay, is necessary merely to prevent a great mass of the population from perishing of hunger, the whole social system

must be fearfully diseased. Dependence is slavery; it has the same degrading influence on the human soul. A man is humiliated in his own estimation, when he finds himself unable, by honest labour, to procure even his daily bread. The sufferings of the family he cannot aid, drive him to despair; without hope, he becomes reckless and vicious, and a pest to the society of which he might have been an honour. Look at the children of such parents! they are swarming in our streets, untaught, and uncared for, without even the innocence of childhood. Yet we who look on with indifference, whilst these wretched, deserted creatures are growing up in vice, are astonished, when they break into some wild act of turbulence, which is but a vain effort to escape from their degraded state."

"Your imagination overcharges the picture," said Graves, smiling. "You are always poetical; but, for my part, I think

the working classes are generally very well off. You are speaking of the mere rabble—the lowest of the low!"

"In a civilized country, there ought to be no rabble," was the calm reply.

"I fear you will never see such a Paradise on this earth."

"Yet I hold it to be the duty of every man of education, to endeavour, by every means in his power, to assist his nation to arrive at such a result," answered Dalton.

"I am afraid your efforts in the cause will probably produce exactly the reverse," said the banker. "The high wages you give your workmen, have rendered mine so discontented that they threaten to strike, and as I cannot afford to pay them even a halfpenny a week more, they are likely very soon to belong to the mob, and to be all on the parish, for nobody wants hands in this neighbourhood at present."

"I have long advised you to pay more attention to your workmen," returned Dal-

ton, coolly. "It is a duty incumbent on every master, to provide for the moral and religious instruction of the men, and the families of the men, who labour for him."

"Say rather, who labour for his wages," rejoined Graves, sharply.

"His wages are not given for generosity, but for profit," was Dalton's reply. "Your workmen know their rights, as well as you do; and they are intractable, because they perceive you do not respect them. It is not just for the balance of profit to be all on one side."

"But the capital, you must remember, my dear sir, is all on one side," said Graves.

"Pardon me! labour and time are the poor man's capital; and whilst the monied capitalist has a right to a profit, which remunerates him for every risk and loss, and pays a reasonable interest for his money, the workman has a claim to a decent means of livelihood, to some hours of

relaxation, and the power of providing for his family, not only their daily bread, but an honest education. Poverty should make no man a slave."

"It appears as if there was more danger of the lower orders becoming masters, than slaves, now a days," said Graves, with a soft smile.

"Let us respect the honest pride of the poor, which induces them to seek good, instead of evil," returned Dalton, with as much mildness as before. "Let us never forget, that we shall one day stand together before a judgment seat, where rank makes no distinction."

"I declare, my dear sir, you would make anybody believe, you had become a socialist," returned the banker, now laughing outright, as if amused by his own wit.

"I am a Christian," said Dalton, solemnly,

"No doubt of that, my dear sir; no doubt of that," returned Graves, "but, as I said

before, I don't profess to understand these profound subjects, as you do—I know nothing of political economy and the rights of labour and so forth; so you must excuse me, if I don't exactly see matters in the same light—I am a plain man, and speak out without reserve, though I am ready to admit, I may be mistaken—quite mistaken. But I hope you will believe I not less actuated by a sense of duty, than yourself. But, unluckily, I have more calls upon my purse than you have. I cannot afford to make such sacrifices for my work-people, not having so large an independent property as you have. Poor relations have the first claim upon me—I have been sadly tormented on that score. And then, my last corn speculation turned out so ill, that it has been a heavy pull. I have some trouble to make all go on smoothly."

"If you are embarrassed, your wife might lay down her equipage. She was

neither born nor bred to such a luxury," said Dalton, quietly.

"Poor thing! she has offered to do so," replied the wily banker. "Indeed, my dear sir, she has much of your generosity of soul in these matters, and sets little value on the vanities of life."

"Then you intend complying with her desires?" inquired the gentleman.

"I cannot, I assure you—it is impossible—appearances are everything now-a-days; and what would the world think if my wife laid down her carriage? There would be a run on the bank immediately, and I should be a bankrupt before the end of the week. No, no, I must find some other expedient, for the difficulty after all, is merely temporary; I only mentioned it, that you might be convinced of my entire inability to encrease the wages of my work people."

"You are the best judge in your own affairs," was the reply.

"Oh, no doubt, matters will soon come

round. Shares are getting up, and I hope soon to pocket a round sum by selling at a profit; but, in the meantime, my dear sir, I should feel greatly obliged if you could accommodate me by the loan of two thousand pounds. Only for three weeks—positively only for three weeks, to pay up my deposits. You shall have the money again with interest, at the end of three weeks, I assure you."

"When you have sold your shares at a profit," was Dalton's calm reply. "I thought you knew, Mr. Graves, that I never speculate in railroads."

"Pardon me—but your generosity, and long friendship, led me to hope—" replied Graves, with calm assurance, "that you would not refuse me a temporary accommodation, at a critical moment, when, perhaps, my whole fortune may be saved by such assistance. My capital is so tied up, that I cannot, for the moment, command my own property, or I should not be in the slightest embarrassment."

"Unfortunately this is very generally the case," answered Dalton, "but though I regret to hear you have staked your whole fortune on the hazard of uncertain speculations, my own circumstances, render it impossible for me to assist you!"

"But you will support my credit, by backing my bills? You cannot refuse me that favour?"

"That also I must decline," was the rejoinder.

"I am sorry, Mr. Dalton—very sorry—disappointed, I confess," murmured Graves, arising. "I should not have troubled you on this subject, had I supposed that my request would have been unpleasant to you. I should not have presumed—"

"No apologies are necessary," was the gentleman's reply. "It is not convenient to me to lend you the money, and there is an end of the matter. Of course the public will learn nothing of your embarrassments from me."

"Of course—of course not. That is quite understood. I came to you as a relation in confidence. But in fact, it was only as a measure of precaution, not one of necessity."

"I am glad to hear it," said Dalton, coldly, "but I am well aware that these are difficult times, to many, who have hitherto considered it their prescriptive right, to be supported in luxury and idleness, at the expense of the people."

A sneering smile passed over the face of Graves, who made no reply. Disappointed in the object of his visit, he had no desire to prolong the conversation, and apologizing for having occupied so much of Mr. Dalton's valuable time, he wished him a very good morning, and left the room, smiling and cheerful, as if he had no wish on earth ungratified.

He then directed his stops to the lodging of Charles Seaton.

CHAPTER X.

A knave's a knave to me in every state,
Alike my scorn if he succeed or fail,
Sporus at court or Japhet in a jail.

POPE.

WHEN Mr. Graves entered the apartment of the returned convict, even his hypocrisy was insufficient to conceal his astonishment, at the appearance of the well covered table, from which Seaton and Uncle Philip arose to welcome him. His former visit had confirmed his belief, that the victim he pursued, was reduced to the most abject poverty.

For a moment his plans were disconcerted. The presence of the old man also annoyed him greatly, and these feelings involuntarily changed the expression of his face; it seemed as if an evil spirit had escaped from imprisonment in his heart,

and asserted its supremacy over his soul and body, so diabolical was the glance that shot from his flashing eyes. But before he had advanced two steps, it was gone, and he flattered himself the passing change was unobserved. With his usual bland smile, he turned towards Seaton and Uncle Philip, and held out a hand to each in the most friendly and disembarrassed manner.

His salutation was very coldly returned by both, and neither appeared to notice his proffered hand. Nothing abashed by this reception, he coolly drew a chair, and sat down with his back to the light.

"I have come," he said, "to express my regret, that so long a time has elapsed since your return, without my having been able to discover your abode, and to offer you all the assistance in my power. Indeed I must reproach you, that you have never applied to me, at a time, when your difficulties must have been very great."

"I thank you," answered Charles, with infinite composure, "but you are perhaps aware, that I saw Mrs. Graves more than

five weeks ago, and her conduct was such, that my sister and myself would rather have perished for want, than have submitted to maintain life, by the heartless charity, either of her, or her husband. There was a time, when I was fool enough to believe you both my friends, but misfortune has destroyed that deception."

"My wife is a vain, foolish woman," answered Graves, in the most frank and friendly tone. "She thinks too much of what the world says; and there is no reasoning with her; but you ought to know me better—I have given you many proofs of my friendship."

"Before my conviction—yes; that I cannot deny; but since—never! Moreover your wife assured me, her whole cruel conduct was in obedience to your commands."

"Oh! women will say anything to excuse themselves," was the banker's reply, "but my letters ought to have convinced you, of my readiness to befriend you."

"I have never received one, since I left England."

"Nay that is strange—most extraordinary. The post must be very irregular. I wrote not long before your term was out, to advise you to remain in the colony, where you might still hope to make a fortune, whereas in England, your conviction has blasted your future prospects."

"Your letter probably arrived after my departure," answered Charles, "but had I received it, the advice it contained, would have been equally thrown away. I have returned to England in search of evidence to establish my innocence."

"My dear sir, the idea is madness," said Graves, in a most persuasive voice. "You know that I, as well as your able lawyer, and your other friends, did everything before the trial that human ingenuity could devise to procure testimony in your favour, but the case broke down; circumstances, probably by chance, were unfortunately so strong against you; and now after a lapse of fourteen years, to hope to upset the

decision of a judge and jury,—my dear sir, it is absolute madness to think of it."

"Madness if you will," returned Seaton, "but a madness that concerns myself alone. To the man who is strong in the purity of his conscience, much seems reasonable, which others mock as folly. I have this strength. The unjust sufferings of many years, have not broken down the pride of an honest heart, and no power but death, shall arrest my efforts to free myself from the stigma of crime."

"It is a noble feeling, which I can fully appreciate," answered the banker, "but still the difficulties are enormous, and money in all dealings with the law, is absolutely necessary. I fear, as I said before, if you have discovered nothing new —but I beg pardon—perhaps you have some thread to direct your proceedings, which makes you so decided."

"He relies on the guidance of Providence," said uncle Philip; "in such cases circumstances frequently come by accident to light when all human wisdom is at fault."

Graves shrugged his shoulders, in a way to show, that he thought this a very poor dependence. "But no doubt, you trust less to accidents," he said, turning towards Seaton, "and have taken some steps, towards procuring the proofs you desire."

"His best defence will be the conviction of the real criminal," interposed the old man, without leaving his nephew time to reply. "He has escaped fourteen years, but though Heaven's judgments are often deferred, they are sure to fall at last, upon the head of the guilty. When a man alone keeps his secret, it may die with him—but if another knows it, it is a strange thing, if it does not escape to the four winds, before he goes to his grave."

"Is any one suspected, as the real criminal, that uncle Philip talks in this prophetic strain?" inquired Graves, with a sneer.

"Fools often suspect more than wise men give them credit for," answered the old man, with his usual vacant laugh "but what signifies what a fool suspects! people only mind what the world says, and the

world is a very polite world, where riches cover a multitude of sins. You know the the world Mr. Graves, and I am sure you are of my opinion."

"It is a pity then, Mr. Philip, that you took so little care of your money, when you had it," returned the banker with a bitter sneer. "Allow me to add, you would oblige me greatly, by leaving me a few minutes alone with your nephew. I came here to speak to him on business, seriously; these interruptions, though very philosophical no doubt, put an end to any thing of that kind. My time is precious, and I will only request your patience for a few minutes."

Uncle Philip cast one of his wild piercing looks at Graves, as if to search the secrets of his soul, and then arose to depart, but Seaton laid his hand on his arm.

There is no need for you to leave us," he said. "Whatever Mr. Graves may have to communicate to me, he can do in your presence. I have no secrets from my best friend, and dearest relative."

"No, no, Charles. He will speak more openly, when you are alone," persisted the old man, "so a very good morning to you Mr. Graves, and if ever you have need of an old acquaintance, to give you a character, send for me. We have known each other many years."

"The poor fellow is madder than ever," said Graves, with a mingled expression of pity and contempt, as they were left alone.

"He is a faithful friend," was Seaton's short reply.

"But not your only one," said the banker. "Charles Seaton," he continued, suddenly assuming a more impressive manner, "I have come hither with no other object, but to be of use to you. I am well aware how much you have suffered since your return; and that your very name has sufficed to expose you to scorn and mistrust, and to deprive you of the means of gaining your daily bread."

"And you come hither to insult me, by recounting facts which, methinks, I must know better than any man," returned Seaton, regarding his visitor from head to foot with cold and haughty disdain.

"Could I have sooner discovered your abode, you should not have been exposed to such trials," returned the wily banker. "I see you mistrust my professions, but you have no cause—for, in truth, Charles, I am, most sincerely, your friend. You must not be prejudiced by my wife's conduct—for I dare not trust her in this affair. I am obliged to act with caution lest I offend old Dalton—who is always violently incensed against you—and were he to know I befriended you, my wife would lose all chance of inheriting any part of his vast fortune."

"I beg you may not expose yourself to such a danger on my account," answered Seaton, coldly.

"It is not necessary, if you will follow my advice," was the wily banker's reply; "you must, by this time, be well aware that, under your own name, and in this town, where every beggar in the street knows your history, there is not the slightest hope of your being able to find the means of livelihood. I tell you frankly,

that, though convinced of your innocence, I cannot give you employment here. Not a clerk in my office—but I need not explain further—"

"Pray finish your sentence, or shall I finish it for you," returned Seaton, with a tranquillity which Graves could not understand, "not a clerk in your office would consent to work with a returned convict! This is what you would say, and, no doubt, you are right. What then, may I ask, has brought you hither?"

"I have come to offer you a situation, which will, at once, relieve you from all your present embarrassments," was the reply. "I am largely concerned in one of the French railways; and I am happy to say that, under a false name, I can, at once, procure you an appointment there, with a salary of three hundred a-year. I am ready to furnish you with any cash, that may be necessary for your immediate wants."

"You make a tempting proposition," said Seaton.

"I cannot forget that you are my wife's nearest relative," answered the banker.

"I can perfectly understand that it is very disagreeable for a man of wealth, who is aiming at being classed with the aristocracy of the county, to have a near relation in his neighbourhood—who all the world knows, has just returned from transportation. I can, therefore, fully appreciate the friendship which induces you to make me such generous offers of assistance; but allow me to add, Mr. Graves, that though it may be very desirable for you, for me to change my name and leave the kingdom, it does not suit my present views, to do either the one or the other. I do not consider employment, or a good salary, as the first objects in life. I am not content to conceal the disgrace of a condemned criminal under a feigned name; and I have no intention to quit this neighbourhood."

"Yet, nothing but shame and starvation await you here," said Graves, bitterly.

"My courage has, hitherto, supported me," was the proud reply, "and it will not desert me, till justification or death."

"Your resolution to struggle against your destiny, is wild in the extreme," rejoined the banker, "I am, indeed, grieved to find that misfortune has driven you to such desperation."

"I have nothing more to lose in life—I have all to gain," answered Seaton. "I may be wild—I have undergone enough to make many men mad; at all events, I am resolute! I can tolerate no middle course—I can submit to no deceit. Truth and courage, with God's assistance, can alone save me—and on these I am determined to rely. When these desert me, it is time enough to submit, like a coward, to misfortune, and call it destiny."

Whilst Seaton thus announced his fixed resolve, slowly and distinctly pronouncing every word with a firmness, from which there was no appeal, Graves unconsciously moved uneasily on his chair, though he kept his eyes fixed on the face of the speaker, with a strange expression of mingled curiosity and anxiety. After a short

silence—during which he appeared lost in thought, he resumed the conversation, by assuring Charles that he was compelled, after all, to admire his perseverance and energy, in attesting his innocence.

"But your presence here, is by no means necessary to collect evidence in your favor," he added. "I will recommend your case to an eminent lawyer, who possesses the highest talent for such delicate investigations."

"I can delegate the task to no man," answered the convict. "My whole energies must be devoted to its accomplishment till I triumph or perish! Though hunger threatened me—which it does not—and abject want should, as you foretel, be the inevitable consequence of my perseverance, I should not be dismayed. The rich and the fortunate, may shrink from such evils; but I have been so long accustomed to every shade of suffering, that I fear them not."

"But you cannot, surely, expose your

young sister to such trials, when you have it in your power to assure her a respectable position, and all the comforts of life ?"

"No more of this !" exclaimed the convict, roused, at length, to ungovernable indignation. "You, who sent my young sister out to a penal colony, without other protection than that of a coarse and ignorant peasant, would do well to forbear to remind me of the claims of that poor girl on my affections. I wished not to reproach you—I desired that as few words as possible should be exchanged between us ; but, when I hear you pronounce the name of one you so deeply injured, I cannot command my feelings ! You force me to be explicit, and to tell you that, since your cruelty to that poor orphan, I despise you from the very depths of my soul, and believe neither your professions, nor your promises. I am well aware that the presence of a returned convict—your vain wife's very near relation, casts a shadow

across your luxury and your pride, from which you would fain be freed at any price; but I am not to be bribed to sacrifice the dearest interests of my life, to relieve you from such an embarrassment. Your employment I desire not—your assistance I need not—and from your company I would fain be relieved."

"You are insolent, Mr. Seaton; but you may yet have reason to repent it," said Graves, arising: "I regret that passion has blinded you to the value of my offers; but I have no doubt, the time will arrive, before long, when you will appreciate them better. Ah! you are impatient it seems," he added, when Seaton, who had walked to the door, held it open in silence for his departure. "I wish you a very good morning, Mr. Seaton, and am sorry I have detained you so long."

So saying, Mr Graves put his hat upon his head, and walked, with a very haughty air, out of the room. But his mortification was extreme; and he was even more dis-

contented with the result of this interview than with that of his morning's visit to Mr. Dalton.

He muttered a curse between his teeth as he descended the stairs, and he banged the street door after him, as he went out, with such violence, that the house shook from top to bottom.

The first impulse of Charles Seaton when he was left alone, was to hurry into the adjoining chamber, where Grace Dalton had sought concealment, and was impatiently awaiting him. Uncle Philip was still with her, and whatever had been the subject of their discourse, it was evident the lady had been weeping bitterly.

The moment her eyes fell on the excited countenance of Charles Seaton, when he entered, a deeper cloud gathered on her brow. She had heard with extreme anxiety, his voice loud in discourse with Mr. Graves, and her newly excited hopes were crushed by the apprehension, that the enmity of this man, whom she regarded

as their implacable enemy, would be doubly excited by this interview. She listened eagerly to Seaton's account of what had passed between them; all her former suspicions, that Graves was well acquainted with the real author of the crime, for which her cousin had unjustly been punished, rushed upon her mind, and in hurried words, she gave utterance to her feelings. Both Seaton and uncle Philip sought to cheer and console her, though they both confessed that they were persuaded of the justice of her ideas.

An hour quickly passed in earnest discourse; but though the mutual joy of Seaton and Grace Dalton was very great at their re-union, many causes for anxiety remained, and the strength of their feelings gave a deep and solemn earnestness to their manner. They had long loved, but now respect, amounting to reverence, was added to this feeling in the hearts of both. Seaton regarded with wonder and admiration the noble minded woman, whom he

had left a timid and inexperienced girl, now fearless and decided, who risked her whole happiness in his destiny, and relied on the purity and nobleness of his character, without hesitation, and without question, as her sole support through all the trials, in which her unbounded devotion to him might involve her. Grace on her side, persuaded of her lover's innocence, profoundedly venerated the strength of moral character, which, amidst his long afflictions, had maintained his courage and his virtue equally untarnished. She was proud that she was devoted to such a man; one not broken down and corrupted, but exalted and purified by misfortune.

Yet, though grave, they were not sad when they parted, they both felt that such love as theirs, hallowed by perfect reliance on each other, possesses a strength which can triumph over every obstacle, in the battle of life.

Grace, before her departure, compelled

Seaton to accept a small sum of money, for the immediate use of himself and Amy, and she promised to send an old friend immediately to him, from whom he could, without scruple, ask advice and assistance in his present difficulties.

Uncle Philip set off half an hour afterwards on his long walk towards his lonely cottage, rejoicing at the happy change in the fortunes of his beloved nephew, and whistling with a lighter heart than he had done for many years before.

CHAPTER XI

May ne'er misfortune's yowling bark,
Howl thro' the dwellin o' the clerk.
May ne'er his generous, honest heart
For that same gen' rous spirit smart.

BURNS.

ALL men possessed of imagination have experienced at times strange and involuntary sensations, or presentiments of future events, whose subsequent accomplishment make the superstitious regard them as the revelations of invisible spirits, who keep

watch over their destiny. And who can pretend to account justly for all the wonderful wanderings of the human mind, and for the myriads of contradictory thoughts, and feelings and images, which are for ever occupying, and agitating and exciting an active brain. Were those of the wisest human being written down as they occur they would present a medley resembling madness, such as no living man ever uttered, and none will ever utter. The happy would shudder to acknowledge the discontent that mingled with their joy, and the mourner would blush to betray the foolish fancies, which in the midst of the profoundest affliction, unbidden flashed across the brain. The brightest visions tarry not longer than the trembling of a star, and the saddest are in mercy chequered by the light of eternal hope and love, and sympathy.

The sorrows of Charles Seaton had that day been for a time almost forgotten in the delight of his unexpected re-union with

Grace Dalton, and the assurance of her unwavering confidence in his innocence and his truth. For the first time for many years a presentiment of the approach of better fortune cheered his heart, as an hour later he was called from the chamber of his sister to receive the gentleman, whom Grace had promised to send to him.

He found the stranger in the next room standing looking out of the window at the black house-top over the way, tapping with his fingers against the glass in exact time to the tune of 'Hope told a flattering tale,' which he very deliberately whistled. The moment he heard the door open, he turned round quickly, He was a short fat man, above fifty, and wore a dress-coat and a very massive gold watch-chain and seals. It was a more than fourteen years since he and Charles Seaton had last met, but they instantaneously recognised each other, and if Englishmen ever embraced, the little man would assuredly have flung his arms round the poor convict's neck. As it was,

he heartily shook hands with him, and said —"How do you do—glad to see you—" some half-a-dozen times, in rather a hysterical voice, and then turned round to set his hat upon a table, and brush the tears from his eyes, which he was ashamed should be seen to overflow.

"Mr. Barnes!" exclaimed Seaton, surveying with astonishment the little round figure before him, which he had known in Mr. Dalton's office, before his misfortunes, as slender and alert as a needy dancing master; "can it be possible that you too, remember me with kindness?"

"Why, my dear Mr. Charles, God bless you, why not?" was the reply. "The violoncello still stands in the old case, and your violin hangs in my parlour. Charming duets we used to play together! 'Hope told a flattering tale!' Eh! we came that strong! Eh! Pleasant days those, Charles! you don't think I could forget them! no, no, not I! we were both younger then, Charles, and a little afraid of Mr. Dalton,

eh! 'but keep up your heart,' have I said to myself many a time and oft, 'he will come back one of these days yet, to play over the old tunes again, before I die.' Eh, Charles, and so here you are at last, my boy, safe and sound!"

"Yes, Mr. Barnes," answered Seaton, "but I fear I can assist your music little. My hands have had other work to do, since we parted."

"Oh, never mind, never mind," said the good little man, gaily, "all in proper time. 'We shall be happy yet,' as the song says, no doubt of that, I tuned your violin myself this morning, Twang—twang—I seemed to hear your very voice—such speaking tones—such harmony—Half an hour later I discovered you were here—have been two months here—wrong of you, Charles, very wrong—not to come to me at once—an old friend deserved to be treated better."

"I need not tell you," began the poor convict, with much confusion.

"Oh no, you need not tell me," was Mr.

Barnes's reply, "I understand all about it, perfectly; but it won't do—it won't do, sir; you and I must have no ceremony. Glad to see you—very glad to see you—so there is an end of that. And now, what can I do to help you? that is the next question. Money, Charles, money, eh!" he continued, winking cunningly with one eye. "Short of that, eh! never mind. I am an old bachelor, you know, and have enough for two. My purse is fuller now than when your uncle first took me into his office. Poor days then, Charles; but that was before your time, when we had our nice little concerts, and bacon and eggs for supper;" and the little man laughed, till tears streamed down his furrowed cheeks. "But I suspect, some people are confoundedly provoked, that you have come back again—and they will be mad outright when your innocence is fully proved, and that must be done without delay."

"But, as you observed, I must have

money," was Seaton's reply; "without money, I know not what course to take."

"Certainly, certainly. Lawyers cannot live without long bills, particularly now there are so many of them. There were not half so many, when I was a boy; but no wonder—new acts of Parliament are passed every day, which nobody understands, not even those that make them, for members of Parliament know, that their younger sons, who are lawyers, will make a livelihood by explaining them. Fine doings, fine doings; but we shall never have cheap law, till nine tenths of the acts of Parliament and Chancery precedents are burnt to light the bakers' ovens. But that cannot be done directly, Charles, my boy, and so we must find means to pay the lawyers handsomely to procure you justice."

"I have a strong recommendation to Mr. Vernon, the first solicitor of this town," answered the convict. "His son, who has a law appointment in the colony,

interested himself in my case, and gave me a letter to his father. He has been unluckily absent in London ever since my return here."

"He is engaged in disputing the election of Mr. Graves for this borough," returned the worthy clerk; "but, I hear, he returns to-day, or to-morrow, that honourable gentleman having been declared unduly elected, guilty of bribery and corruption, &c. The news arrived by this morning's post, and has given universal satisfaction. Mr. Graves paid high for the honour of becoming a member of Parliament, for he wished to belong to the aristocracy; but, after all, the aristocracy only laugh at the pride of such up-start money conservatives, who disgrace their party. Graves is very angry—very angry indeed; but mark my words, Mr. Charles, this is only the beginning of his downfal. You and I shall see changes before long, or I am mistaken.

'Hope told a flattering tale,'

eh, my boy? there are queer stories afloat. But you must leave this miserable place, and come home with me, Charles!"

"I thank you, with all my heart," was the poor convict's reply; "but I am not alone."

"In the name of fortune, you have not got a wife, have you?" ejaculated Mr. Barnes, with a movement of dismay.

"No, not yet," was the answer; "but you have forgotten my sister."

"Ah, little Amy! to be sure! poor child! shameful business that! she must come with you to be sure. Fourteen years ago, a fine girl, by this time, no doubt!"

"But are you not still in the employment of my uncle Dalton?" demanded Seaton, with anxiety.

"Certainly! but what then? my house is my own. An Englishman's house is his castle!"

"But we are penniless; and I cannot

consent to be a burthen on your generosity!"

"Nonsense! all pride and nonsense, I tell you," answered Mr. Barnes, arising, and taking his hat. "Don't I owe everything I am worth to your uncle?"

"If you will promise to assist me to procure work, so that I can earn an honest livelihood, I will come," answered Seaton.

"Call your sister then, and let us be off at once. I presume, you have neither of you much baggage, and the sooner we go the better, for I must hurry to the office, to get leave of absence for the evening. A fine evening we shall have of it, Charles, I promise you, nothing like work for making a holiday agreeable. So no more delay. You can have no serious objection to a plan of Miss Dalton's, that is certain, so call your sister, and let us be off."

Seaton could no longer hesitate to comply with this friendly and agreeable proposition. Amy's preparations were soon completed, and Mrs. Price's reckoning quickly

paid. It grieved the young girl to part from this worthy woman, to whose kindness they were indebted for all their present happiness, without telling her, whither they removed; but Mr. Barnes insisted on secresy, and hurried her away before she could answer the enquiries of the astonished landlady.

They soon reached the home of the worthy old bachelor, near the outskirts of the town. It was one of a line of respectable small houses, commonly known by the name of terrace, such as are to be found in England alone; humble dwellings, only one story high, but where the middle classes enjoy all the comforts and independence which can be found in a palace. Abodes of contented and prosperous industry, their shining windows, polished knockers, and tiny gardens before each door, proclaimed the general love of order and cleanliness, and the house of Mr. Barnes surpassed even those of his neighbours, in these national characteristics.

Not a weed was to be seen in the garden, nor a particle of dust on the door steps; and Amy, who had little remembrance of English habits, was perfectly astonished by the extraordinary neatness of the parlour, into which they were ushered by the elderly maid-servant of Mr. Barnes. Nor was she less pleased, with the little bedroom assigned for her use. After all her recent deprivations, she could not restrain her tears, when she regarded the whiteness of the curtains and the linen on her small bed, and the pure cleanliness of the simple furniture. She felt like a weary bird of passage, that, after being long buffetted about by the storms of Heaven, finds its own nest, at last, and her sleep, that night, was more tranquil and refreshing than it had been for many months before.

CHAPTER XII.

Now, as thou lov'st me, do him not that wrong,
To bear a bad opinion of his truth!

Shakspere.

It was with feelings of a very painful nature, that Grace met her uncle Dalton at dinner, after her visit to Charles Seaton. It was the first time in her life she had felt the degrading consciousness of concealment, which her fine moral sense rendered almost insupportable to her, even for a brief space of time.

The recent denunciations of her uncle against Seaton, made her feel it a crime for her, to hold intercourse with him in secret, whilst under Mr. Dalton's roof, and she had already decided to avail herself of the first favourable opportunity, of putting an end to a position, which filled her with anxiety and shame. But the fear of causing pain to her uncle, by her disclosures, occasioned her the greatest anxiety.

Mr. Dalton spoke little during their short meal, but her agitation had not escaped his observation, and no sooner were they left alone at its conclusion, than after attentively regarding her for several minutes, he asked with evident anxiety, if anything had occurred to distress her.

Her lips trembled, but she could utter no sound, as she raised her eyes to his, with an expression of sorrow and distress, which astonished him, and then covering her face with her handkerchief she burst into tears. She had meant to be calm; she had resolved to relate all that had

passed that morning, simply and composedly, and if possible, to avoid all approach to passionate excitement, between her uncle and herself, on a subject, where she well knew their feelings were so different; but the effort was beyond her strength. She had been too violently agitated by recent visits, to be able at once to regain the mastery over her mind, for which she had long struggled—struggled, till she at length believed, that she had become callous and indifferent—when in truth, her indifference had been despair. But with the return of hope, all the ardent feelings of her nature were again awakened to full activity, and even whilst she wept in silence, beneath the searching glance of her uncle, she knew with rejoicing, that the darkness which had long overshadowed her existence was at an end; that the monotonous tranquillity of her past years, was now exchanged for passionate activity, and elevated by the thought that it was for the welfare of him, whom she had so long

and singly loved, that she was now to feel, to act, and perhaps to suffer, her heart swelled with a proud consciousness of the worth of her life's aim and object. With recovered tranquillity, she at length wiped away her tears, and replied to Mr. Dalton's repeated and earnest inquiries, as to the cause of her agitation.

"Pardon me, my dear uncle," she said, "I did not mean to distress you thus, but I feel it my duty to speak to you, on a subject painful to us both, and to you especially, but after all the affection you have shown me, the very semblance of deceit would be insupportable to me. Where there is love, there must be truth and candour."

"You tremble, Grace!" returned Mr. Dalton, regarding her every moment with increasing astonishment, and becoming himself alarmed, by her unwonted agitation. "What is it you have to tell me?"

"Charles Seaton has returned," was

her simple reply, for though her nerves were weak, her heart was strong.

"And has dared to address himself to you?" demanded her uncle, turning as pale as death.

"No! conscious of his innocence, he has sought concealment, till he can fully prove it to the world. It was by accident alone, that I discovered his abode, where he and his young sister, Amy, were in the last extremity of poverty and want."

"Grace, Grace, forbear!" cried Mr. Dalton, whilst trembling with restrained passion, he pressed his clenched hands firmly on the table before him. "This subject alone can make dissension between us. Forbear, if you love me."

"As my father, I love you, but I cannot forbear," she returned. "You shall not hear from others, what it is my duty to tell you. I have seen my cousin, Seaton, and his sister, and must continue to do so."

"Not whilst you are under my roof, so

help me Heaven!" exclaimed the gentleman, striking his clenched hand on the table, with all the violence of unbridled passion. "Girl! girl! why do you presume to outrage my feelings thus?"

"Because I scorn deceit!" was her firm reply. "Uncle you must, and shall hear me, though it be for the last time. If I transgress, it is for others, not for myself. If I err, it is from a mistaken sense of duty, but Heaven I trust will guide me to do right. It is now ten years you have been as a father to me, and I have sought to requite your kindness by a daughter's dutiful affection, but I can never forget that four years before this union began, my heart's earliest love was given to another. Before I was seventeen I was the promised wife of Charles Seaton. Misfortunes fell thick upon him——"

"Guilt—fearful guilt," murmured the old man.

"Guilt! never!" exclaimed Grace with an involuntary movement, as if she strove

to throw the contamination of such an idea from her. "Angels are not more innocent! and believing this, though all the world may fall away from him, in his misery, yet I, his promised wife, must be true to him, even unto death. Though the rights of the church have not united us, our faith has been pledged to each other, and such vows are heard in heaven."

"I now learn I have been long deceived," was Mr. Dalton's bitter reply.

"No, sir! never! you commanded silence, and I obeyed. I should otherwise never have had any secrets from you. Even now, my dear uncle, it afflicts me, to offend you, and I grieve deeply, that my duty to you, and my duty to my long affianced husband, are in opposition; for the hour is come, when I must choose between them; the hour is come, when no other claim on earth shall induce me to leave the innocent to despair, to want, and friendless desolation."

"Then by heaven we must part, from

this hour, and for ever!" exclaimed the old gentleman, arising from his chair, and pacing the room, whilst his face was pale, and his lips quivered with the violence of his ungovernable emotion. "I cannot exist under the same roof with one, who is the open, and professed friend of the murderer of my only child. Go, go. Forsaken by the whole world, I can die alone."

The rage and despair of the old man as he pronounced these awful words, offered a fearful, but a sublime spectacle.

Grace gazed at him one moment, with intense agony; then, with a passion scarcely less intense than his own, she fell on her knees on the ground, and grasped his hands in both hers when he approached her.

"Uncle! by all that is merciful and just," she cried, whilst her tears fell thick and fast, no longer entertain this fearful belief. Though Charles Seaton has been reviled, disgraced, and punished for a crime

of which he is innocent as you, or I, even the law in its unjust severity, did not find him guilty of the terrible act of which you accuse him!"

"The law! the law! what is the law?" cried Dalton, "compared to a father's instincts. If every man were innocent, whom the law leaves unpunished, it were a golden age."

"When no proof of guilt can be adduced—" interposed Grace——

"Peace, girl! peace! bandy no further words with me, or I shall go mad. You have long known the story of the dark crime, that robbed me of all I treasured upon earth—you have known the secret agony, that made me what I am, and I believe—fool that I was—that you, and you alone upon earth, pitied the childless old man!"

"Dear, dear uncle, believe so still!" exclaimed Grace, in earnest and imploring accents.

"Folly—folly—there is no truth—no

sympathy on this side the grave," was Dalton's stern reply, and covering his face he sunk back on a sofa with a feeling of unutterable despair.

Grace arose from the ground. There was a fearful conflict in her bosom. She loved her uncle as a father; to behold his suffering and know herself the cause, was agonizing to her feeling heart, which had no pleasure, but in ministering to the happiness of others, but even in this moment of trial, she did not forget that Seaton's afflictions were still greater, and she remained firm to her purpose, firm in the resolution to sacrifice, if necessary, all other worldly interests, and worldly affections, for the sake of the man to whom her love and her faith had been in early years engaged.

His misfortunes, which had alone delayed their marriage, bound her closer to him, than even the church's benediction could have done, in love, in duty, and fond devotion. It was a pure and exalted

feeling, devoid of all selfishness, and it gave her strength in this hour of need, when the spectacle of her uncle's sorrow would have mastered every other feeling to support with unwavering firmness the idea of the separation he menaced.

She trusted, that though driven from him during the violence of his passion, it was only to return at no distant period, when indisputable evidence had established his nephew's innocence, to comfort and console his remaining years.

If all who feel nobly were rightly understood, how much pain and sorrow would be spared in the course of life, but Grace, as she watched the agitated countenance of her uncle, knew that it was then in vain to appeal to his understanding. It was under the shadow of a cloud—a cloud of passion, which had gathered too long, and darkly, to be momentarily dispelled. But she did not despair, she felt as if the assurance had been given her from on high, that the light of truth should at length

break through that dense obscurity, and that all those she loved should yet dwell happy in its light.

"Grace!" said Mr. Dalton, after a long pause, during which, though he had not uncovered his eyes, he was conscious she was weeping, "forgive the violence of an old, broken-hearted man; respect my wishes for the future, and let us forget all that has now passed."

"My dear, dear uncle," returned the lady, sadly but firmly, "it cannot be. I cannot desert the unfortunate."

"What, is your passion for this worthless man so mad, that I have lost all hold on your affection?" returned Dalton, with more of sorrow than of anger.

"Oh, no—no," was Grace's eager reply "my gratitude, my love for you, dearest uncle, will remain the same—undiminished to the last hour of my existence, but even to these I cannot sacrifice my sense of duty."

"And you persist in your intent hold intercourse?"

"I must meet Charles Seaton fron to time—I must protect his young from persecution and scorn," ret Grace, hastily interposing, "I could done this without your knowledge, b ceit is hateful to me."

"If such is your unchanging resol we must part," answered the old with a cold severity of expression finitely more painful to his niece th most violent bursts of passion, fo knew that every word he uttered his heart to agony. "As I have said, I cannot live under the sam with one who holds friendly inter with the murderer of my child. Grace—you have much to answe During fourteen long years, these have never been pronounced, but yo forced them from my lips. Yes, S the nephew whom I cherished as a the murderer of my only child. I

it, and, as such, I cursed him! Go, leave me, or by Heaven I may pronounce the same malediction against you—you whom I have loved so tenderly, and believed so true."

Grace bent down, and would have kissed the old man's hand before she departed, but he withdrew it, coldly, and pointed to the door with a gesture of anger and impatience.

She was deeply wounded; but she said, in a soft, clear voice—

"God bless you, sir. May we meet again, when the shadows that now divide us have for ever passed away."

Then bowing her head in meek submission, she left him, weeping, but unchanged in her generous and noble resolution.

All great excitements of feeling are followed by a stillness and exhaustion, resembling stupor. The faculties seem to pause in their ordinary activity, to recover strength, after an unnatural exertion, like

the hush of the winds after the violence of the tempest.

In such a state of mind, Grace Dalton remained seated, for nearly half-an-hour after she had regained her chamber. She could not blame her uncle, when she remembered that his only child had perished in the burning house, of which Charles Seaton had been punished as the incendiary; and as the image of the agonised and broken-hearted old man in his affliction and his despair, returned to her recollection, her resolution wavered; but only for an instant. She remembered Seaton, and she felt she had no choice, but that her duty to him must be fulfilled, however painful the sacrifices it might impose upon her. The idea of leaving her uncle alone in his old age and his solitude, afflicted her far more than any evil opinion he might form of her conduct, for she relied that time would prove, even to him, that she had done right. Grateful for his love

and kindness, she grieved deeply to think how much her desertion would pain him.

"But it is for another, not for myself, I wring his heart, by the appearance of ingratitude," she thought, "and Heaven will pardon and strengthen me in this exceediag trial."

The bond of affection which had so long united her uncle and herself, once broken painfully asunder, the trying moment of separation once passed, and pronounced to be for ever, she felt it was best for her to seek another home, as speedily as possible. With recovered elasticity of mind, she began the irksome task of packing her wardrobe, although she was still undecided as to her plans for the future. But she had no anxiety as to her mere change of residence. She had money, and with money she knew she could every where find a temporary home. For the opinion of the world, that is to say, the people who considered themselves the world, in the town where she resided, as to the step

she was about to take, she cared not at all. She had never been enslaved in that social bondage, which acknowledges the opinions of persons whom we neither know, nor respect, as the arbiter of our actions, instead of moral duty and conscious rectitude.

Midnight had long passed, and the grey morning already dawned in the sky, before all her preparations for departure were completed, and she had written a short note to Mr. Dalton, imploring his patience and forgiveness. Her last act, before she lay down to rest, was to pray for the protection and assistance of Heaven, for herself, and those she loved; but, though exhausted by the events and agitated feelings of the past day, she had slept little, when the sun again shone into her chamber.

She breakfasted alone as usual, in her little parlour, and then watched with a troubled heart, to catch a last glimpse of her uncle, as he went out according to his ordinary habit, to visit his colliery office.

But in vain, she waited more than an hour later, than it was his wont to depart. He still remained in his library; and, in answer to her enquiries, old Hannah, the maid, informed her that he had given strict orders, that he was to be disturbed by no one—except on business of importance.

"Has he asked for me?" demanded Grace, eagerly, with a lingering hope that a reconciliation might yet take place.

"No, Miss. He told me you were going away, and I was to let him know when you were gone," answered the old woman; "but bless you, Miss, I hope you are not going to stay long away—for master looks terribly ill—and so wild—I don't know what to make of him. He can very ill spare you."

Grace made no reply to these observations, though they pained her greatly; but telling the servant that some one would come in the course of the day in search of her luggage, and slipping a sovereign into

her hand, after she had charged her to deliver her note to Mr. Dalton, she begged her to take good care of her master, and kindly wished her good by.

With a heavy heart, she then left the house—which had been her home for above ten years; but the consciousness that, though she was forsaking her beloved uncle, and wandering forth into the world houseless and solitary, she made this sacrifice for the sake of Seaton, gave her courage and resolution to persevere; and endeavouring to fix her mind upon the future instead of the past, she hurried on towards a quiet street on the outskirts of the town, where she had resolved to seek a new abode.

CHAPTER XIII.

But how could I forget thee? Through what power,
Even for the least division of an hour,
Have I been so beguiled as to be blind
To my most grievous loss? That thought's return
Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore.

WORDSWORTH.

MR. DALTON was, naturally, of a hasty temper; and his nerves had been rendered much more irritable, by the loss of his child, but his excited passion was quickly calmed by solitude, where all his noble and

generous qualities, again resumed their mastery over his mind. During many waking hours of the night, he calmly considered what had passed between Grace Dalton and himself, and he deeply regretted the anger to which he had given way. He loved her as a daughter, and a feeling almost amounting to despair, took possession of his mind when he thought of her departure. But on further reflection, he felt they had both acted right; persuaded of the innocence of Seaton, she could not have acted otherwise—whilst it was impossible for him to allow her to remain an inmate of his dwelling, whilst she held friendly intercourse with one whom he had long regarded as the murderer of his child.

Harassed and unrefreshed, the sorrowful old man arose early on the following morning. He indulged a lingering hope, as long as Grace was in the house, that she would make an effort to see him once more, so that they might part in peace; and as long as he remained in suspense he was

unable to pursue his usual occupations. At length, he saw his niece cross the garden and pass out at the gate, and he knew that he was thenceforth alone. Then, all thoughts of the present or the future were suddenly replaced by the vivid recollection of the terrible past.

Fourteen years were, to his imagination, annihilated; and the events preceding that period, arose clearly on his mind, as if not a day had elapsed since then. Spectres of the past seemed to stand around him, visible and influencing his whole being. Pleasure and pain—the greatest he had ever known on earth—hope and despair, were all present, as on that day and night, which had decided his mournful destiny, and made him a widower and childless.

"All—all—lost!" he murmured, "and she, to whom I clung the last—even she forsakes me—though she knows the whole extent and depth of my sufferings. Oh!

Grace, Grace! how could you thus desert me on the very brink of the grave!"

He pressed his hand before his eyes, but the visions would not depart; he paced up and down the room, but the current of his thoughts was unchanged. At length, as if impelled by an irresistible influence, he resumed his seat, and hastily unlocked one of the drawers in his writing-table. His hand trembled as he opened it. Fourteen years had passed since he had had the courage to look at its contents. The first thing on which his eyes fell, was a little girl's frock. It was old-fashioned and yellowed by time, but the father bent down and kissed it with holy awe! He was unconscious that his tears fell fast as he did so. Beside this relique, lay a little doll—of which the dress was partly singed and burnt, and the fragment of a silver coral, such as children wear when they are cutting teeth.

"My child! my darling child!" was all

the poor father uttered as he gazed on these fragments.

The little being to whom they had once belonged, seemed again before him, in all the freshness and innocence of childhood. He heard its joyous laugh—he saw its little arms stretched out towards him, but he knew it was delusion.

"Blessed cherub!" he exclaimed, "I will come to thee ere long!"

And gently closing the drawer, he sat for nearly an hour, lost in abstraction. His thoughts were not of earth, and a holy calm descended on his spirit, a commune with the eternal and the infinite can alone confer.

But even this soothing pause of holy reflection, was not long vouchsafed to the broken-hearted old man, and his solitude was speedily interrupted, in the manner, of all others, the most unpleasant to him.

The door of his library was suddenly thrown open and Mr. Graves was announced.

The banker at once perceived he was an unwelcome guest; but nothing dismayed, he, with his usual fluent language, excused his intrusion by assuring Mr. Dalton that he would not detain him long, and had only insisted on being admitted, in consequence of having come expressly to communicate to him a very important circumstance, of great interest to them both.

"I thank you," returned the gentleman, coldly; "but I think I can spare you the trouble of making any further explanation. I have been already informed that Charles Seaton has returned."

Mr. Graves, though considerably surprised, was not to be silenced by this reply.

"You have rightly concluded," he rejoined, "that is one of the facts I had to communicate to you, my dear sir; and I was grieved to be compelled, by my duty, to do so, as I am well aware how many painful remembrances, how many harrowing images must be re-awakened in your mind,

by the mention of that name. But I assure you, I have done everything in my power to conceal from you the proximity of a fellow whose crimes are a disgrace to our family; and to prevail on him to quit the country once more. I have gone so far, as even to offer him an honourable situation on a French railroad, if he would depart at once, and take another name; but hardened in vice, he has not the smallest remains of shame; and has rejected all my offers with disdain. I thought it, therefore, my duty, my dear sir, to put you on your guard, lest he should make an appeal to your generosity, or intrude unexpectedly on your privacy."

Mr. Dalton listened to all this in silence, and continued to sit with his eyes fixed upon the ground, for some minutes, after Mr. Graves had ceased speaking.

"I have long endeavoured to forget that a man who has injured me so deeply, still existed on the face of the earth," he said at length, in a calm and solemn

voice. During the short time th
mains between me and the grave, I v
to cherish thoughts of love, and
hatred, in my heart. Yet every on
nected with me, seems resolved, lat
recal this painful subject to my re
brance."

"I am aware it is painful to you
well aware of it," answered Grav
smoothly as before, "but my dea
Dalton, neither I, nor my wife, could
to see you most shamefully deceive
account of this worthless wretch, S
by one, to whom, if there were s
thing as gratitude on earth, your sli
wish ought to be a law, and in whor
have, hitherto, placed too much confi
and reliance."

"May I ask to whom you allud
am not fond of anonymous accus
Mr. Graves."

"To no other, I grieve to confe
than to Miss Grace Dalton," ans
Graves, with a well assumed appeara

reluctance, whilst he eagerly watched the effect his words produced on his hearer.

"You remember, no doubt, she was engaged to be married to him, before the commission of his crimes. She is romantic, sentimental—I know not what, and Martha tells me, in spite of judge and jury, would believe nothing to his disadvantage. She has, no doubt, deceived you, and kept up a correspondence with him, during the whole time of his absence, for there exists no doubt, that immediately on his arrival here, in extreme poverty, she hastened to pass hours in his society; has largely supplied him with money, and has, at last, placed both him and his sister in a respectable abode. This scandalous and shameless proceeding, is already the talk of the whole town; and really, my dear sir, I thought it better you should hear it from me, than from some indifferent person. It is perfectly abominable, after all your kindness, that Miss Dalton should persist in maintaining an intercourse with such a scoundrel,

when she is an inmate of the afflicted father's house, whose happiness he has so irreparably destroyed."

"Enough, Mr. Graves!" exclaimed Mr. Dalton, suddenly, in a stern and severe voice, which made the blood mount into the banker's smooth and pallid face. "The kindness is very doubtful, which can thus relentlessly tear open the festering wounds of the sufferer. I already know everything you have told me, and your comments on my niece's conduct, whom you know I have long and dearly loved, might well have been spared. The purity of your intentions towards me, would then have been more free from suspicion."

"How can it be possible, that you already know everything!" exclaimed Graves. "So much secresy and caution has been observed in these interviews, that I thought no one was aware of them but myself!"

"Yet you told me just now, they were already the subject of town talk! Extraordinary contradictions, Mr. Graves, for a

man of your consummate prudence. To content your curiosity, I beg to inform you, that Miss Grace Dalton, of whose duplicity you have expressed so much horror, herself gave me the information you have been so impatient to communicate."

"Grace Dalton!" cried the banker, no longer making any effort to conceal his surprise.

"No other!" replied the old gentleman. "She may be imprudent, her fidelity to a condemned criminal may excite my displeasure, and the disapprobation of the world; but she is no hypocrite, and she errs alone from a mistaken sense of duty."

"But her ingratitude towards you, my dear sir—that is beyond all dispute!" returned Graves, in a voice of exulting triumph.

"I deny it," returned Mr. Dalton, calmly and proudly; "and were she really ungrateful, I only have a right to complain."

"As you please, sir!" said the banker; "but the world judges by appearances,"

"Then let the world amuse itself by appearances. You seem to be a complete slave to this same world, wherever it exists, but I have long forgotten it, and desire only to please my God, and content my own conscience. We will leave Grace Dalton to manage her own affairs, as she thinks best. She is now perfectly free; she left my house this morning, to seek another home."

"Is it possible that she has had the audacity to quit your protection, and throw herself into the arms of a convicted felon! Upon my honour, even you, Mr. Dalton, must confess, that such conduct is perfectly unjustifiable; a disgrace to her, and to her whole family."

"I judge no one harshly," was the old man's reply. "If she is determined to remain faithful to her early engagement, with the conviction of Charles Seaton's innocence, which she entertains, she could not do otherwise than leave me; but, be assured, the principles of Grace Dalton are

too noble and pure, for her to connect herself with shame in any form."

"Really, my dear sir, I cannot understand such expansive charity," returned Graves, with ungovernable bitterness, "and I am astonished to hear you carry your indulgence so far. The girl has disgraced herself, and all her relations, by running after a returned convict, under whatever form of duty, and so forth, she searches to disguise such conduct, and my wife can hold no further communication with her—she will be shocked when she hears this intelligence."

"Then you had better not repeat it to her," said Mr. Dalton. "The less said about this whole business in its present state, the better, in my opinion."

"You are right, my dear sir, perfectly right," returned the banker, who had again recovered his apparent composure. "We should never be the first to publish our own disgrace, but allow the world to find out, whatever is to our disadvantage. It

is a sad business; and though Charles Seaton is only my wife's cousin, I would rather he had gone to the bottom of the sea, than have returned here, to bring nothing but disgrace and trouble on all connected with him."

"Very probably,' was the quiet reply. "But if you have nothing further to communicate, we will, with your permission, change this painful subject," returned Mr. Dalton, with the same wonderful command over himself, which he had maintained during this whole interview. "I understand you have lost your election. The committee has decided against you!"

"The whole affair has been an infamous juggle," replied Graves, to whom the question was far from agreeable. "The government had a creature of their own to support, and so I have been declared unduly elected; but I trust I shall triumph over them yet. I am proud to say, I am not a man to be trampled on with impunity."

"It is somewhat long to look forward

to another election," returned the old gentleman, drily; "great changes may occur to us all before that arrives."

"For the better, I hope," said the banker, arising to depart, for he could not help perceiving, that his company was not desired. Then pleading urgent business at his office, he took a hasty leave.

He was by no means satisfied with the result of his visit. He had come thither with the intention of exciting disagreement between Mr. Dalton and his niece, for of the credit and favour of Grace with the old man he was jealous in the highest degree, fully persuaded that she was the only obstacle likely to prevent his wife Martha inheriting the whole of their uncle's fortune. But she had herself disarmed him of the very weapons he had meant to turn against her. He had now, also, more reason than ever to fear the consequences of Charles Seaton's return. Money, he believed, could do everything, and of money there was not a doubt the

convict would no longer be in want. From that hour he knew no tranquillity; a restlessness of spirit took possession of him; a perpetual anxiety tormented him; and even his careless wife could not fail to observe his sleepless nights, and his daily increasing irritability. Had she loved him, she must have dreaded, that he was suffering under some secret but mortal disease.

CHAPTER XIV.

Happy ye sons of busy life
Who equal to the bustling strife
No other men regard!

BURNS.

THE position of Grace Dalton, in the small neat lodging which she took in the house of a worthy ship captain's wife, on the outskirts of the town, was very different from that of most young women of her age, possessed as she was of twenty thousand pounds. Her dwelling, though comfortable, was simple in the extreme; she was

far removed from the quarter considered by the rich and fashionable, as the only habitable part of the town, and Martha Graves would have considered herself humiliated, by being supposed to be acquainted with any one, in such a mean and vulgar street. But Grace set no value, either on the artificial distinctions, or artificial pleasures, which many persons only value money as the means of procuring. She had hitherto been grateful that she was not compelled to earn her daily bread, as her time was thus at her own disposal, for the service of others, and the cultivation of her own mind, and she had rejoiced, that she possessed the pecuniary means, after her own simple wants were supplied, of contributing to alleviate the sufferings of the poor, and to assist in improving their moral and social condition. But now, when she felt that her self-denial gave her the power to aid Charles Seaton and his sister in their extreme distress, her heart exulted doubly at the consciousness of the indepen-

dent simplicity of her habits, and even the painful struggle she had undergone in leaving Mr. Dalton was speedily compensated by her newly acquired liberty to assist the man of her choice, to the fullest extent of her wishes.

She had no sooner arranged all things to her satisfaction in her new lodging, than she proceeded to the house of the worthy Mr. Barnes. She very well knew, at that hour of the day, the punctual clerk was always seated at his desk, in her uncle's office, but as she expected, she found Charles Seaton alone in his little parlour. In the anxious hope of receiving a visit from his cousin, he had remained at home the whole morning. It would be impossible to describe the feelings of the convict, when Grace at length made her appearance, and he learnt from her own lips, that she had left the house of Mr. Dalton, and left it on his account; that she had made a choice between them, and following the

dictates of her love, had clung to him, the convict, and the exile!

But well he knew the sufferings this decision had cost her; and though he read nothing but joy in her beaming eyes, as he held her hands in his, and listened to her narrative, of all that had passed since they parted the day before, he failed not to remark, that her cheeks were very pale, and he was too well aware of the natural delicacy and timidity of her nature, and her strong attachment to her uncle, not fully to appreciate the noble generosity, which had influenced her to make so painful a sacrifice for a friendless outcast, such as he! But Grace forgot all, except her joy at their re-union, as she listened to the language in which he thanked her, with all the fervour of the most unbounded love and ardent admiration.

"We can now meet daily, without further obstacle," she said, whilst tears of pleasure filled her eyes, "and Amy must

come and live with me. She is at an age, when she has need of a woman's influence and protection, and I will gladly, for the future, supply to her the place of her poor mother, as far as I am able."

"Oh, Grace, how shall I thank you!" returned Seaton, "you have given utterance to the very first wish of my heart. By the assistance of my generous friend, Mr. Vernon, my sister had the best education to be obtained in the colony, but our long voyage, and the difficulties we have had to struggle with in England, have now for many months deprived her of all instruction, except such as I could myself bestow. In moral training, she has had early and severe lessons; in all things good and useful, she is well disciplined, and her sweet patience and devotion, have been my best support in the hour of trouble; but the poor child has a sad lack of female accomplishments. I have taught her as much as a brother can teach a young and innocent girl; but there are

many gentle graces, both of mind and manner, she can only learn from one of her own sex; and in my opinion, from no one who is so competent to instruct her, as from you, my own sweet cousin."

"Then she shall come home with me to-day," was the lady's joyful reply, "and for your expences when alone, my dear Charles, I have brought you this," she added, laying a well filled pocket-book on the table at his side. But to her surprise and disappointment, Seaton refused the gift.

"Call it pride, if you will, but I cannot be dependent, even on you, my dearest cousin," he answered. "I must work; I told you I had brought a letter of recommendation to Mr. Vernon, the principal solicitor in this town, from his son, who has been long my friend in Sydney. The absence of this gentleman prevented my delivering it, till this morning. I did not see him, but an hour afterwards, I received a note, in which he expressed his desire

to assist me, and begged me to come to him to-morrow morning at ten o'clock. I cannot doubt he will give me employment, and that the payment will be sufficient for my immediate wants."

"But should you have need of money, you must promise to regard me as your banker," returned Miss Dalton, earnestly.

"Yes, dearest Grace," he replied, "but I feel as if our re-union had brought me all other good fortune in its train."

Long and earnestly did they continue to talk over the events of the past, and their hopes for the future, till they were at length interrupted by the return of Mr. Barnes to dinner, at the usual hour of two o'clock. The good man rejoiced to find Grace with her cousin, but he was not so pleased to hear that she had left the house of Mr. Dalton.

"Very bad, very bad for the old gentleman to be alone," he said. "He is half mad, poor man, already, and now it will be all over with him. I don't like it."

"Nor I either, my dear sir," answered Miss Dalton. "He was peremptory, and what could I do."

"Very true, my dear Ma'am. Between him and Mr. Charles, what could you do? promised wife—and all that.

'Hope told a flattering tale!'

eh! So I hope you have found a comfortable residence for yourself. Keep up the honour of your family, and all that. Rather a ticklish thing though, for a single woman to live alone, under such circumstances, in this chattering town, my dear young lady. Always remember, there are countless eyes upon you, and the tongues of all the old ladies are busy with your affairs. Moreover, you must be cautious of your visits here—I am a single man, you know —hem! and I have an old maiden lady, Miss Wood, next door, who will be at the window twenty times in a minute, when

she has once spied the flutter of a petticoat. Rather awkward for me, upon my word!" and the worthy man blushed rosy-red, wiped the perspiration from his forehead, and sunk back in a chair, as if quite overpowered by his apprehensions of the spinster's animadversions.

"But whilst Amy resides here, her cousin may surely come to visit her, without exciting ill-natured observations," rejoined Grace, smiling.

"Cannot say, upon my word; cannot say, my dear lady, upon my word. These old maids have confoundedly long tongues, and have made free with my reputation before now," replied Mr. Barnes, with great embarrassment; "and I would not have them meddle with your name for all the world."

This was a new difficulty, which Grace, in the ardour of her devoted affection, had never taken into account, and she felt greatly inclined to laugh at the possibility of her

visits to Mr. Barnes, affording subject for scandal; but a glance at the perplexed countenance of her host, convinced her how much the worthy man was in earnest. Though she had, till then, forgotten how the idle and malicious are ever prompt, in all classes of society, to busy themselves with the affairs of others, and pass malevolent judgments, where not half the premises are known to them. She saw that, though apparently ridiculous, there was some truth in the old gentleman's apprehensions, and though she would have slighted them, had she been alone concerned, she felt she had no right to subject him to annoyance.

"Don't let this distress you longer, my dear sir," she therefore said. "I have no wish to compromise either your reputation or mine, and you are quite right to be cautious as to receiving the visits of single women. But I think I have found a way to obviate all difficulties. Amy shall return

home with me, and her brother can visit her from time to time, at my lodgings, without any impropriety."

"Excellent, excellent, my dear young lady," exclaimed Mr. Barnes, as if relieved from an infinite load of care. "And I can come myself, also, now and then, when you two young ladies are living together. That is quite another affair."

Amy, at this moment, entered the parlour. Though aware, for some time, that her cousin was in the house, and impatient to see her once more, as long as she supposed she was alone with Seaton, she had, from a feeling of delicacy, kept away. But the loud voice of Mr. Barnes, having convinced her that further forbearance was unnecessary, she hastened down stairs to welcome Grace Dalton, with the joy and affection of a sister. But when their first salutations had been exchanged, the delight of the young girl was suddenly checked, and, with her eyes fixed on the

ground, she listened, with silence, to Grace's invitation.

"My brother, my dear brother," she said, as she took Seaton's hand in hers, and, with tearful eyes, looked earnestly and imploringly in his face. "I cannot leave him alone!"

"But I shall be out all day, dearest Amy; and every evening I will come and see you," he returned, fondly caressing her.

"Do you wish me to go," inquired the girl, half reproachfully.

"Indeed I do. It will be better for us both," was Seaton's firm reply.

"Then I will go," answered Amy, brushing away the tears which had gathered in her eyes, "and you will remember your promise, Charles, to come and see me every day."

"I hope so," said Grace. "We shall expect him every evening, when he leaves Mr. Vernon's office. And now, dearest

Amy, get your bonnet and come with me, for it is already long past Mr. Barnes's dinner hour."

But in spite of all Mr. Barnes's sensitiveness about female visitors, now the ladies were in the house, he was too hospitable to allow them to depart, and positively insisted they should sit down to partake of his repast.

It was the first time, he said, that he had had the honour of Miss Dalton's company, so they must drink her health in a glass of old sherry, which had come out of her grandfather's cellar. "I have never tasted a drop of it, since Mr. Charles left us," continued the worthy man, "but now we will drink to better days, and prosperity to the family. Your poor uncle, worthy gentleman, is the most to be pitied, after all, for after such a loss as his, no one can wonder at his anger against Mr. Charles, whom he has been taught to regard as the cause of all his misfortunes. It was a terrible business, and I confess, for my part,

I never could believe the house took fire by accident."

"Were that really the case, I should have reason to deplore it," said Seaton, "for it would then be impossible for me to prove that I was not the incendiary."

"It could not be sir, it could not be!" returned Mr. Barnes. "The whole was a deep laid plot, I have no doubt of it. You know I was the last in the bank, the night before it happened, and as I swore on your trial, every desk and closet was carefully locked. I was the first who entered after the fire was extinguished; things were in a very different state then—yet the fire had not consumed enough, to hide what the thieves had been about. The books were more burnt than anything else, and it was difficult afterwards, to get the accounts into order. Graves made your uncle believe, that the burning of these account books was a striking evidence against you, as he had discovered, a day, or two before, as he asserted, that you

had sundry times taken money, and made false entries to conceal your robberies, which had the books not been destroyed, he could readily have proved against you. But you see, Mr. Charles, I knew you too well to believe that, and I had my eyes about me, more than some people gave me credit for. Though I could swear to nothing positively, I confess I suspected a great deal, and that was the reason, why I withdrew from the bank, very shortly after you were sent away."

"Were the books entirely destroyed?" inquired Seaton.

"All, except a few scraps, which were of no use, Graves said, to the house, and these were ordered to be burnt as waste paper. This occurred, about a month after you left England. I contrived to save a half burnt sheet, or two, and by the help of my previous knowledge of the business, and a good memory I was thoroughly convinced that the accounts afterwards were

entirely false, and that he had cheated the firm of nearly four thousand pounds."

"And did you tell Mr. Dalton this?" eagerly demanded Seaton,

"I could prove nothing," was the reply; "for though the matter was plain to me, the evidence was not sufficiently clear, for me to venture to attack a man like Graves, after a judge and jury had found another man guilty. It had come accidentally to my knowledge, some time before, that he had been secretly, and largely speculating, and certainly at the time he did so, he was not known to possess any capital. A bad beginning, Mr. Charles, a very bad beginning. Speculating with other people's money, has sent many a man across the water."

"But it appears, on the contrary, to have prospered with Mr. Graves," said Grace, who had listened with profound interest, to these disclosures.

"Yes ma'am, yes," answered Mr. Barnes,

sipping his wine, "but it is not all gold that glitters. Believe me, I would rather be sitting here, drinking a glass of wine in your and Mr. Charles's company, in my own little parlour, ma'am, simple John Barnes, Overseer of the Parish, and so forth; with nothing but my honest savings, and my salary, than R. Graves, Esq., with his fine house, equipage, and so forth, even if M.P. were tacked to the end of his name. I flatter myself, I am the more respected man of the two, ma'am, and I am very sure I am much the happier."

All laughed heartily at this declaration, of which none doubted the truth.

"It is very true, Miss Dalton, I assure you," continued the delighted Mr. Barnes. "There is not a happier man than myself in the united kingdom, especially since I have seen Mr. Charles come back again. I have enough for myself, and a friend now and then; I flatter myself, I am as respected on change, as any man in the town, Ma'am—I could not live without working,

ma'am—my days glide on like clock-work; tick, tick, all smooth and regular, and then in the evening, for a pleasing recreation, I play the fiddle, ma'am. 'Hope told a flattering tale!' eh, Mr. Charles; nothing like that, and a clear conscience for winding up the day and assuring pleasing dreams. But dear me, there is three o'clock striking! I shall be five minutes too late at the office, and that is a thing which has not happened for years. So good morning, Miss Dalton, and Miss Amy; I have not a moment to lose. I shall be back at six o'clock, Mr. Charles; good morning!" and away went Mr. Barnes, with unwonted speed, to perform the monotonous tasks, which had been the constant business of his harmless life.

But though unobtrusive, and frequently despised, as the unimportant drudges of society, of what enormous value are these men of practical sense, steady, quiet perseverance, and incorruptible honesty, who contented with the place which fate has

assigned them, go on for a long series of years, finding pleasure from habit, in performing the duties of their office, with conscientious industry and integrity, whilst to another, such a life would be insupportable. Like the secret wheels of a vast machine, which, though ever turning on the same fixed axis, produce incalculable results, they are indispensable to the commercial prosperity and honour of their country, and unconsciously impel the movement of social progress and national development. They are little springs, which put the great ones in motion. It is industry and steady, honest principles, which make men and nations great, and preserve them from the corruptions of luxury and wealth and the delusions of words and passions.

Amy could not restrain her tears when the moment for parting from her brother came. She knew it was only for a short time, yet they had been so long together in sorrow and trial, that the idea of living

under another roof, was painful to her young heart, and though he promised, in compliance with Grace's invitation, to visit them the following evening, she bade him farewell with great reluctance; and it needed all the affectionate kindness of her cousin, to reconcile her to this sudden and unexpected change.

CHAPTER XV

But shall thy legal rage pursue
The wretch already crushed low
By cruel fortune's undeserved blow
Affliction's sons are brothers in distress,
A brother to relieve how exquisite the bliss.

BURNS.

SEATON did not fail to present himself on the following morning, at the house of the solicitor, Mr. Vernon. He was admitted by the servant, and forthwith ushered into a dull, dark, back parlour on the ground floor, communicating with the offices beyond. The rain was falling

thick and fast, so as to make it almost impossible to see across the narrow little yard beneath the single dusty window. There was no fire in the papered grate, the sofa and chairs were old-fashioned, and covered with much worn stuff of black horse hair, and the pattern of the many coloured Turkey carpet was no longer discernible. The furniture stood stiffly around the walls, as if for show, not use, and the whole apartment had an air of melancholy stillness, like the dusty pews of a deserted church.

The anxiety with which the convict awaited his interview with the solicitor, made him doubly sensible of all this gloom. His heart had many anxious misgivings, when the door was closed after his entrance, and he found himself alone in this comfortless room. He could not sit down; he could not remain still; he walked to the window, and gazed through the dusty panes, without being conscious of the objects without. He walked to the fire-place,

and then returned to the window, his heart all the while beating quick and hard, as he thought of Mr. Vernon, and the reception he was likely to receive from him. It was not because he came there to seek work, or recommendation to an employer, that he was then so anxious; that was no longer an object of the first importance to him; but he believed, that the whole welfare of his future life would be decided by his interview with so eminent a lawyer, and so just a man as the solicitor, from whom alone he could expect the advice, and assistance, necessary to direct him in his efforts to establish his innocence. But after his long misfortunes, it could not be wondered at, that notwithstanding the energy of his character, his fears during this painful pause, were greater than his hopes.

At length, to his relief, he heard footsteps approaching along the passage; the door was opened, and an elderly man whom he presumed to be Mr. Vernon, entered the room. He was tall and thin;

dressed in black, with a very small head and narrow face, and returned his salutation with a very stiff bow. Poor Seaton was utterly dismayed. He felt there was nothing to hope from the generosity, or benevolent impulses of one, who was evidently a man of forms. He had not courage to speak, and there was a short pause, during which the gentleman in black, eyed him very inquisitively from head to foot, as an undertaker might have done, who was about to take measure for his coffin.

"Mr. Seaton, I presume," he said, at length, with great solemnity.

Seaton again bowed.

"Pray be seated, sir. I am very sorry, very sorry you should have had to wait, particularly when you come by appointment, but lawyers cannot always command their time—pray be seated, sir,—and unfortunately this morning an unexpected business has occurred, which compels me to make an apology for Mr. Vernon. I

fear he may be detained another quarter of an hour, before he can have the pleasure of speaking to you."

"Then I have not the honour of addressing Mr. Vernon!" exclaimed Charles, with a delight he did not attempt to conceal.

"Mr. Vernon, sir, did you say? do you not personally know that gentleman?" was the measured demand of the man in black.

"I have not that honour!" answered Seaton, with more tranquillity.

"Hum! ha!" was the rejoinder. "No, sir, I am not Mr. Vernon, but his first clerk, which in most matters of business, is pretty much the same thing, so if you will honour me by an explanation of your wishes, sir, and I can be of any service to you—but I hear Mr. Vernon's voice—I wish you a very good morning, sir!" and gliding out by a side door, he closed it behind him, before his employer entered from the opposite side of the room.

A stronger contrast than the principal offered to his clerk, could not well have been imagined. Mr. Vernon was a stout, middle-sized man—probably, above sixty years of age—but time had taken nothing from the freshness of his complexion; and the acuteness of his bright and cheerful eye. His high and projecting forehead was entirely bare; and only at the back of his large head, waved a few stray locks of snow white hair.

"Mr. Seaton, I am glad to see you," he said, holding out his hand with great cordiality, to his anxious visitor, and at once removing all apprehensions as to the nature of his reception by his frank and friendly manner. "I am very glad to make your acquaintance, both on my son's account, and on my own. You left the boy well, I hear, and prosperous!"

"I left him respected and beloved by all who know him," replied Seaton, earnestly. "A father may, indeed, be proud of such a son, who, in the midst of his

prosperity, is ever the friend of the unfortunate."

"I am glad you have found him so, Mr. Seaton," said Mr. Vernon, with emotion.

"I owe him my life," answered the convict, whilst tears filled his eyes. "Without his sympathy, and the hopes he excited in my sinking heart, I must have died under my trials."

"God bless him!" exclaimed the father, with simple fervour; and though Seaton did not speak, his heart echoed his words. "Your's appears to have been a hard case, —a very hard case, Mr. Seaton," resumed the solicitor, after a short pause. "My son has detailed the principal features of your story to me. I was absent on business at the time of your trial; but it appears, there was nothing but circumstantial evidence brought forward against you? You must relate the whole affair to me yourself, when we have more time; and, I assure you, if I find your assertions of innocence are well grounded, and as worthy of

credit as my son has represented them, I will spare no pains to procure a reversion of your sentence."

"But the expense, Mr. Vernon?" returned Seaton, anxiously.

"We will talk of that another time; and now I remember, you mentioned in your letter to me, you were in want of employment. I perfectly understand that your present position is one of great difficulty and suffering; particularly to a man of honourable mind; but don't lose courage, my dear sir; we have all troubles to encounter in the course of our lives; and though, certainly, destiny has been more cruel to you than to most, still if you have a clear conscience, you possess that which many prosperous men would change places with you to regain; and Heaven, we will hope, has brighter days in store for you. No doubt you write a good hand. You were in you uncle's bank, I believe?"

"For three years," was Seaton's reply, "and, by your son's kind influence, I have

been employed in a lawyer's office during the latter part of the time I was in Australia."

"Ah, well—very well! then I can easily find you work; and till you have something better to do, you shall be paid at the same rate as my other scribes—a guinea-and-a-half a-week, Mr. Seaton—I am sorry it is not more."

"I shall be most grateful for such an arrangement," was the reply.

"You shall also have a small office to yourself, to prevent anything disagreeable—you understand me?"

"Perfectly; and I fully appreciate your kindness. Experience has taught me its necessity, since my return to my native country."

"I hope, ere long, all need for such precautions will be at an end; but, in the meantime, even worthy people have their prejudices—and we cannot mend them. Are you prepared to remain with me, to-day?"

"I shall be delighted to do so."

"And I have some very pressing business in hand, and shall be most glad to have your assistance. I beg you to follow me."

So saying, Mr. Vernon led the way into his own private study. He then showed Seaton a small office leading from it, where he requested him to take his place at the desk, and laid the papers before him which he required him to copy.

"You are at liberty every day from one to two o'clock, Mr. Seaton," he said, "and, except in very urgent cases, none of my clerks remain here after six in the evening."

Mr. Vernon then wished him a very good morning, and left him to his work.

When Seaton found himself alone, his mind was, for some time, in too great confusion for him to commence the task assigned to him; and distracted by a rushing throng of ideas, his excitement, and his exultation, were in proportion to the ap-

prehensions with which he had looked forward to his interview with the solicitor.

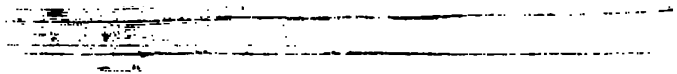
He had once more been addressed with respect as an unfortunate equal, by a gentleman of distinguished talents and honor; instead of being insulted and crushed, a hand had, at length, been stretched out towards him, to succour and to save; and this sudden transition from the state, bordering on desolation and despair, through which he had so recently struggled, was so sudden and so great, that he felt as one who had been unexpectedly rescued from impending death, and restored at once to the love and hopes of active life.

And Grace, like a bright and guardian angel, seemed to hover at his side, and point to a future of happiness and peace. Conscious of his innocence, he now felt, for the first time, that it would, before long, be fully proved to other men. He relied on the simple promise of Mr. Vernon, as on the fiat of an absolving judge. For

a brief space, he could not think, he could only feel, and his feelings were those of undefinable pleasure.

But at length, as the confusion of his mind subsided, he remembered that his task must not be neglected, and with a strong effort, he fixed his attention on the papers before him, and worked indefatigably till six o'clock.

The remaining hours of the day, he spent in the company of Grace Dalton and his sister, and though fraught with excitement and agitation to them all, they were hours of great happiness, to which the full confidence of sympathizing love, and the cheering influence of mental activity encouraged by hope, imparted a charm never to be forgotten by any of the three cousins, who all felt that their sorrows and their joys were from thenceforth indissolubly united.

END OF VOL. I.

T. C Newby, Printer, 30, Welbeck Street, Cavendish Square